THE IMITATION OF CHRIST
IN THE THOUGHT OF SØREN KIERKEGAARD

By

BRADLEY RAU DEWEY

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PRÉCIS

The purpose of this dissertation is to present an exposition and interpretive analysis of the theme of the Imitation of Christ in the writings of Søren Kierkegaard. The intricately interwoven whole of Kierkegaard's understanding of Imitation is discussed under the three major Division headings of (1) The Candidate Imitator, (2) The One Imitated, and (3) The Practice of Imitation. The first Division deals with the Candidate Imitator and the personal requirements Kierkegaard considered necessary for the would-be Imitator of Christ. According to Kierkegaard, in order to make the initial decision of faith and to comprehend and maintain the quest of Imitation, the Candidate must possess a mature self -a self endowed with intense subjective passion, objective self-consciousness, independent will and disciplined obedience. The second Division presents the One Imitated, Jesus Christ, who establishes the Pattern for the life of Imitation. Kierkegaard emphasizes the concrete humanity of Jesus as well as the directness and applicability of many of his recorded words. The concreteness of Jesus' life and words guards the Pattern against "dehistoricizing," insures its relevance to daily life, and locates the life of Imitation in the specific existence of the individual Christian. As extended by Jesus, the invitation to the life of Imitation is seen as a strange coalescence of attraction and offense. The third Division describes, insofar as this is possible, the practice of Imitation. Given the qualified and committed Candidate who accepts Christ as Pattern for his daily life, what can be said about the actual shape of such a life? How does the Candidate relate himself to the Pattern in Imitation? Does the Imitator exist in the mainstream of public life, or is he somehow separate and isolated? How does he discern the proper Christian response in a given situation? In general, the final part deals with what it is like to live the life of Imitation. The unified cohesiveness of the various elements of Kierkegaardian Imitation is asserted here and will become progressively manifest throughout these pages. All the points herein discussed are unified by a common referent: the Imitation of Christ. Each Division requires the other two for proper and complete qualification, interpretation, and application. Since Kierkegaardian Imitation is not a Christology or a formal theory, but rather a life-pattern which only a self can choose and appropriate, it is necessary to discuss the topics of the self, the life-pattern, and choice. Since we are not dealing simply with the form of Imitation, but with the Imitation of Christ, it must be made plain that and how it is Jesus Christ in whom Kierkegaard finds the precedents which establish the locus, nature, demands, and promises of the Christian life-pattern. Also, the spiritual context within which the would-be Christian lives is an important environmental aspect of Imitation. Thus, any two Divisions together provide the proper perspective from which to view the remaining one. And no strand of the discussion can be lifted up for analysis without bringing with it the whole fabric of Imitation. These three inter-related Divisions present a unified exposition and interpretive analysis of the theme of the Imitation of Christ in the writings of Søren Kierkegaard.

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PREFACE

I should like to acknowledge my debt to the teachers, administrators, and fellow students who helped provide the context for many kinds of development.

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For the constant and self-giving nurture of confidence and assistance given me by my parents, I am indeed thankful.

This volume is dedicated to my wife, whose devotion, patience, and hard work cannot be measured by words or years, and without whose support this work would never have been begun or completed.

INTRODUCTION

Methodology

Any American writing on Kierkegaard nowadays runs the risk of being misunderstood right at the start. Not so long ago Kierkegaard was almost a fad in America. Much hasty and disappointing literature reached the public, stirring up both enthusiasm and distaste for him. In many cases, these reactions were as vaguely grounded as the secondary literature which produced or encouraged them. Fortunately, Kierkegaard has recently become less fashionably popular. And the hurried literature of heated opinion, entertaining comparison, and "relevant application" has fallen off somewhat. But residual traces of the early indiscretions remain. True, today's reader does not encounter quite so many cryptic (and often out of context) sentences from Kierkegaard on the fly-leaves of novels. And fewer are the articles in the vein of "Browning -an English Kierkegaard,"[1] and "Nuclear Dilemma: with a Nod to Kierkegaard."[2] But Kierkegaard's literary remains are still preyed upon by journalistic biographers, superficial antagonists, and -perhaps most damaging of all- uncritical admirers. Anthony Ostroff's poem "Sören-Regina" -for all its artistry- reduces Kierkegaard to an archetypal instance of the dominance of thought and mind (vs. beauty and soul) in a human life.[3] The simple invocation of Kierkegaard's name may not conjure up the mystique it once did. Yet John Updike has written in his recent "Thoughts While Driving Home:"

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[1] H. Whitcomb Hess, "Browning -an English Kierkegaard," in The Christian Century, May 2, 1962, pp. 569-571.

[2] Robert McFadden, "Nuclear Dilemma: with a Nod to Kierkegaard," in Theology Today, Jan. 1961, pp. 505-518.

> Was I clever enough? Was I charming?
> Did I make at least one good pun?
> Was I disconcerting? Disarming?
> Was I wise? Was I wan? Was I fun?
> Did I answer that girl with white shoulders?
> Correctly, or should I have said
> (Engagingly), 'Kierkegaard smolders,
> But Eliot's ashes are dead'?
> And did I, while being a smarty,
> Yet some wry reserve slyly keep,
> So they murmured, when I'd left the party,
> 'He's deep. He's deep. He's deep'?[4]

And with us still are those willing to "use" Kierkegaard and his terminology to serve ends which he never intended and even stoutly rejected. Carson McCullers' sensitive novel Clock without Hands presents a distortingly truncated version of the Kierkegaardian self which does not even hint at its theological dimensions.[5] Of course, there are no rules against such uses of Kierkegaard. And in many cases they are justified and illuminating. But they do tempt less careful folk to frame inaccurate and one-sided opinions about Kierkegaard.

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[3] Anthony Ostroff, Imperatives (New York, Harcourt, Brace and World, 1963).

[4] John Updike, "Thoughts While Driving Home" in Telephone Poles and Other Poems (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1963), p. 15.

[5] Carson McCullers, Clock without Hands (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1961).

On the whole, the abuse of Kierkegaard seems to be lessening. Perhaps the mere passage of time has rendered him less *à la* mode. But another factor involved here, it is hoped, is the growing awareness of how much is not known about Kierkegaard's vast and labyrinthine literature. A steady, if thin, flow of well-researched books and articles in English has long pointed up the intricate and puzzling nature of his thirty-five books and twenty volumes of private papers. Kierkegaard's various pseudonymous masks, his indirect communication, not to mention his often florid prose, have discouraged close and thorough scholarship. Many have been tempted to frame conclusions prematurely, to superimpose systems that are not there, and to supply words for him where Kierkegaard is intentionally silent. The Scandinavian and German academic communities have long been impatient with this inventive style of Kierkegaard scholarship. It was recognized that what is needed first is a clearer understanding of what Kierkegaard himself said, not a multiplication of what others say about him. Those engaged in research should possess familiarity with the complete works, then focus on a limited area of Kierkegaard's thought, studying it for its own sake, and producing careful exposition and analysis. General theories about Kierkegaard's life or writings must be held in check until the evidence has been presented as objectively as possible. During such presentation of evidence, the scholar should try to remain in the background, so that he does not detract from or distort

Kierkegaard's words with his own commentary and criticism. Certainly the scholar has the right to interpret and criticize. But this right must not be usurped; it must be earned. It is earned by the labor of diligent research, and the exercize of restraint from laudatory or inflammatory inferences when selecting, expounding, analyzing, and interpreting the material from the primary sources. Perhaps this is unrealistic. And it may unfairly limit the expression of opinion to a small number of specialists -at least temporarily. But given the unstable and transitional nature of Kierkegaard scholarship -especially in the English-speaking countries- it is felt that there is a serious need for more basic research. Until this need is adequately met, the difficult counsel of patience and restraint appears to be in order.

It is in this spirit that this essay was researched and written. It is neither a eulogy nor a denunciation of Kierkegaard, neither a defense nor an attack. Such tactics have their time and place; but is not now and here. As has been indicated, there is too much basic work yet to be done. Passages of appreciation and disapproval are found herein. But these do not dominate, and they occur only after thorough research and meticulous documentation of the points under discussion. Nor is this essay proposed as the answer to the whole puzzle of Kierkegaard, a unifying vision whereby all aspects of the man and his work can be synthesized. The present limited supply of focused and competent textual work makes such grand theses rather premature. The discussion on the following pages has been constructed on a pattern which proceeds by selecting a limited theme for consideration, and applying carefully precise methods of investigation to various aspects of that theme. The expositional and analytic sections are intended to be inclusive and fair to the various insights which Kierkegaard brought to any one particular issue. The material was selected to provide comprehensive treatment and illumination, not to support some personal forejudgment. Apparently contradictory statements by Kierkegaard, or statements which resist exegesis, are not subjected to artificial harmonization or eisegesis. The above are the expressed methodological goals which are pursued throughout this essay.

Subject Matter

The theme selected for presentation in this essay, Kierkegaard's understanding of the Imitation of Christ, is a central element in Kierkegaard's thought on Christianity. According to Kierkegaard, the Christian's "obligation is . . . the Imitation of Christ."[6] It is Christ the Inviter who calls all men to a life of Imitation.[7] The only thing which Christ desires of his followers is Imitation.[8] A glance at the footnotes will show that these preceding statements are taken from the later so-called "Attack" literature. Given the late date, pamphlet form, and militant style of this Attack literature, one might suspect Kierkegaard of indulging in exaggerated overstatement for the sake of gaining an audience and making his points unmistakably clear. If this were true, it would necessitate some qualifications of Kierkegaard's insistence upon a severe sort of Imitation. Marie Mikulová Thulstrup takes this position. She claims that Kierkegaard intentionally dramatized his views for the "pedagogical" purpose of provoking a reaction.[9] His own ideas on the Christian life were not quite that strict and severe, she asserts. This interpretation is debatable, and is rejected by this writer. The stern words about Imitation found in the Attack literature of 1854-55 simply re-state the theme which had sounded throughout most of Kierkegaard's pre-1854 writings. The Attack literature is no slight or radical departure from the mainstream Kierkegaardian position, but can be shown to be in direct continuity with his earlier thoughts. Several Journals entries from as early as 1847-48 reflect his already-formulated view that Christ is "the model"[10] whom the Christian should "be like."[11] Kierkegaard asserts that "everything which Christ expressed is an essential part of the Christian life,"[12] and that whoever loves Christ must become like him.[13] Later Journals entries echo these same themes in the same language.[14] Furthermore, the books which Kierkegaard readied for publication during the earlier 1847-48 period incorporate the demanding theme of Imitation. The first chapter of The Gospel of Suffering (1847) sets forth in uncompromising language the Christian obligation to follow Christ.[15] Christ is the "pattern for a human being" to follow.[16] This major theme is amplified throughout that discourse: "Such was the example, and such must the disciple be . . ."[17] The pattern for the "love" described in Kierkegaard's Works of Love (1847) is clearly God's love as seen in the life and teachings of God-made-flesh.

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[6] AC 280 (XIV 349).

[7] AC 287 (XIV 356).

[8] AC 264 (XIV 329). Cf. AC 130 (XIV 158).

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[9] Marie Mikulová Thulstrup, "Kierkegaard's Dialectic of Imitation" in A Kierkegaard Critique, ed. Howard A. Johnson and Niels Thulstrup (New York, Harper and Brothers, 1962), pp. 266-285, esp. pp. 267. 279.

[10] Dru 698, 887 (VIII A 303, X 1 A 134).

[11] Dru 698 (VIII A 303).

[12] Dru 777 (IX A 82).

> And was not Christ love? But he came into the world to become the prototype in order to draw all men unto himself that they might become like him . . .[18]

This book delineates Christ-like love, recommends it to all men, and makes it obligatory for all would-be Christians. Taken as a whole or considering any one of its parts, Training in Christianity (written before 1848 although published in 1850) is none other than a declaration of the Christian command to Imitation. It deals with the Pattern, the human reaction to the Pattern, and what a man can expect from life if he sets out to follow Christ.

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[13] Dru 846 (IX A 438).

[14] Rohde 187, 205 (X 4 A 293, X 4 A 626). Dru 925, 1174, 1230, 1252, 1283 (X 1 A 455, X 3 A 725, X 4 A 352, X 4 A 560, X 5 A 54).

[15] GS 5-20 (VIII 305-316).

[16] GS 15 (VIII 313).

[17] GS 10 (VIII 309). Cf. GS 34 (VIII 326).

[18] WL (H) 247 (IX 252).

> . . . Christ's life here upon earth is the paradigm; it is in likeness to it that I along with every Christian must try to construct my life . . .[19]

Approximately one-third of For Self-Examination (1851) is devoted to explaining what sort of life results when "Christ Is the Way." "The proof for the Christ-like really lies in imitation" (Kierkegaard's italics).[20] Over half of Judge for Yourselves (1851) deals with the theme of "Christ as Pattern." "Christ is the Pattern; and to this corresponds imitation. There is only one true way of being a Christian -to be a disciple."[21] The material cited above is not understated, soothing, or neutralized by Kierkegaard's simultaneous stress on grace, as is sometimes claimed.[22] These are awesome commands, sternly presented, repelling the non-Christian, insulting the self-righteous, offending the nominal Christian. The character of Imitation presented in Kierkegaard's earlier works is neither more nor less severe than that of the Attack period. It is the same Pattern and the same Imitation of Christ which is found as a dominant theme throughout most of Kierkegaard's writings.

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[19] TC 109 (XII 101). Cf. TC 167 (XII 156).

[20] FSE (H) 80 (XII 352). Cf. JFY (Ox) 204-209 (XII 462-468).

[21] JFY (Ox) 215 (XII 473).

[22] Marie M. Thulstrup argues that the Attack period's Imitation is more exaggerated than Kierkegaard's earlier views on Imitation, because he does not combine it with grace as he did earlier (M.M. Thulstrup, op. cit., p. 279). It can safely be said that Kierkegaard's declaration of Imitation is never softened by the presence of grace. Hence, it is not exaggerated by the absence of any specific mention of grace. If ever a religious thinker held reciprocally related and uncompromised views on both Law and Gospel, it was Kierkegaard. (See infra pp. 291-299.) Marie Thulstrup also claims as part of Kierkegaard's Attack exaggeration his emphasis on celibacy and his deprecation of sexual relations.

The Kierkegaardian Context

Having introduced the subject matter and the methodology, some mention should be made of the general context within which Kierkegaard himself deals with this theme of Imitation. Instructive on this point are the titles of the two main "books" within Kierkegaard's Concluding Unscientific Postscript. Book One deals with "The Objective Problem Concerning the Truth of Christianity." Book Two takes up "The Subjective Problem; The Relation of the Subject to the Truth of Christianity; The Problem of Becoming a Christian." The distinction being made here is crucial for understanding what Kierkegaard says about the Christian life of Imitation. Within the Kierkegaardian context, the traditional theological treatise couched in the expository mode is not to be demeaned in any way whatsoever. Such literature can reflect

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The four Journals references she gives as documentation are taken from the 1854-55 period, indicating their connection with the "overstated" Attack literature. However, at least two other references to these same themes can be found in Kierkegaard's Journals as early as 1849 and 1850 (Dru 964, 1136; X 2 A 14, X 3 A 501). Such varying evidence should be taken into consideration by anyone arguing the continuity vs. exaggeration issue.

the glory of God and may participate in the sacred heritage of the Church. Kierkegaard is no iconoclast, but exhibits genuine respect for and acceptance of the main body of orthodox credal formulae and doctrinal commentary. And he is concerned, as well, to explore the ways in which someone can become related to such material. He asks the following questions. What might be expected of a man who, for example, commits himself to "The Truth of Christianity"? How is his subjectivity qualified -ideally and actually- by this commitment? Is there a peculiar temper and style of the existence before God? Given a certain Christian framework of creeds and tradition, are there certain corresponding personal movements which are appropriate or inappropriate? It is questions such as these with which Kierkegaard deals in Book Two of Concluding Unscientific Postscript. And it is primarily in this context that the Imitation of Christ is discussed throughout the Kierkegaardian literature. From this perspective Kierkegaard focuses, not on the "Objective Problem" of Book One, but on

> the question of the individual's relationship to Christianity. It has nothing whatever to do with the systematic zeal of the personally indifferent individual to arrange the truths of Christianity in paragraphs; it deals with the concern of the infinitely interested individual for his own relationship to such a doctrine.[23]

Any study of Kierkegaardian Imitation must, then, take into consideration both the verbal content and the intangible context within which Kierkegaard speaks. Context without content is directionless. Content without context is lifeless.

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[23] CUP 18-19 (VII 6-7).

At one place in the Concluding Unscientific Postscript Kierkegaard admits the possibility of knowing "what Christianity is" without being a Christian.[24] Certain parts of his writing about Imitation are couched in this "what is" mode. But Kierkegaard denies emphatically that any man can ever know what it means "to be" a Christian without actually being one.[25] Yet he does frequently probe this realm of the "to be" and gives suggestions and hints of what it might be like to live the life of Imitation, of the various ways in which one's subjectivity could be qualified by the commitment to follow Christ. Consequently, in order to give as full and accurate a presentation as possible, this essay undertakes a dual task. It provides a detailed exposition of the "what is" aspects of Imitation -those elements which can be discussed in a fairly straightforward manner. But Kierkegaard's literature would be misrepresented if the net result of this study were a formal Christology or a doctrine of Imitatio. Along with the essential descriptive material will be presented an interpretive analysis which employs a variety of techniques to isolate and evoke the Kierkegaardian spirit of Imitation. It is hoped that by including the reciprocally illuminating elements of "what is" and "to be," Kierkegaard's understanding of Imitation will be portrayed with a meticulous realism which nevertheless shows forth the intended pulsing life of the subject matter.

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[24] CUP 332 (VII 322).

[25] Ibid.

But it is precisely at this point of "life" that a complexity arises. According to Kierkegaard, the more general "what is" aspects of the Christian life impinge on the individual Christian in a highly personal manner. The Christian commands are heard by a specific person, applied by him to his particular condition at that time, and obeyed in a fashion which bears the unique stamp of his personality. Since Kierkegaard asserts that personal and situational variances must be taken into consideration, there is always the possibility of exceptions and innovations. Within the complex and fluid matrix of existence, any detailed, univocal delineation of the life of Imitation is impossible. This impossibility is attributable to the idiosyncratic nature of the individual, the shifting oddness of the world, and the free in-breaking sovereignty of God. Thus, Kierkegaard sets limits on the degree and type of specification of the life of Imitation. These limits will not be trespassed in this essay, since to do so is to indulge in groundless speculation which Kierkegaard himself prohibited. But we shall inspect the location and shape of these boundaries, and learn thereby much about the area they enclose, while gaining some important negative knowledge of the realms they exclude. Other aspects of the life of Imitation lie beyond the reach of words; to speak of them is to misrepresent them. Even when we wish Kierkegaard would speak, he is often silent. His silence will be respected. But to discover where and why he is silent is to learn much about his understanding of Imitation. Kierkegaard does say many things directly and plainly. And there are subtle connections and common referents which unify his varied literary production. Where relevant, these are duly noted herein. But Kierkegaard does not trespass onto the unverbalizable, nor does he impose order on the unorderable; and this essay will not violate the integrity of his literature by filling in the missing words or artificially systematizing his thought. Accordingly, if the question is asked "What is the life of Imitation?" we must be prepared for the kind of answer which fits the Kierkegaardian context of life.

Division of the Subject Matter

The text of this essay is divided into three main parts called "Divisions." The intricately interwoven whole of Kierkegaard's understanding of Imitation is discussed in these Divisions under the headings of (1) The Candidate Imitator, (2) The One Imitated, and (3) The Practice of Imitation. Each of the three Divisions presents and interprets material relevant to its theme, relating it to the themes of the other two Divisions. The first Division deals with the Candidate Imitator and the personal requirements Kierkegaard considered necessary for the would-be Imitator of Christ. According to Kierkegaard, in order to make the initial decision of faith and to comprehend and maintain the quest of Imitation, the Candidate must possess a mature self -a self endowed with intense subjective passion, objective self-consciousness, independent will, and disciplined obedience. The second Division presents the One Imitated, Jesus Christ, who establishes the Pattern for the life of Imitation. It is noted that Kierkegaard emphasizes the concrete humanity of Jesus as well as the directness and applicability of many of his recorded words. The concreteness of Jesus' life and words guards the Pattern against "dehistoricizing," insures its relevance to daily life, and locates the life of Imitation in the specific existence of the individual Christian. As extended by Jesus, the invitation to the life of Imitation is seen as a strange coalescence of attraction and offense. These first two Divisions will provide us with Kierkegaard's thought on (1) the characteristics of the Candidate Imitator, (2) the location of the practice of Imitation, and (3) the identity of the One to be Imitated. The purpose of the third Division is to describe, insofar as this is possible, the practice of Imitation. Given the qualified and committed Candidate who accepts Christ as Pattern for his daily life, what can be said about the actual shape of such a life? Kierkegaard's answers to the following questions are discussed. What constitutes proper motivation for Imitation? How does the Candidate relate himself to the Pattern in Imitation? Does the Imitator exist in the mainstream of public life, or is he somehow separate and isolated? How does he discern the proper Christian response in a given situation?

In general, the final Division deals with what it is like to live the life of Imitation.

The unified cohesiveness of the various elements of Kierkegaardian Imitation is asserted here and will become progressively manifest throughout these pages. All the points herein discussed are unified by a common referent: the Imitation of Christ. Each Division requires the other two for proper and complete qualification, interpretation, and application. Since Kierkegaardian Imitation is not a Christology or a formal theory, but rather a life-pattern which only a self can choose and appropriate, it is necessary to discuss the topics of the self, the life-pattern, and choice. Since we are not dealing simply with the form of Imitation, but with the Imitation of Christ, it must be made plain that and how it is Jesus Christ in whom Kierkegaard finds the precedents which establish the locus, nature, demands, and promises of the Christian life-pattern. Also, the spiritual context within which the would-be Christian lives is an important environmental aspect of Imitation. Thus, any two Divisions together provide the proper perspective from which to view the remaining one. And no strand of the discussion can be lifted up for analysis without bringing with it the whole fabric of Imitation. These three inter-related Divisions present a unified exposition and interpretive analysis of the theme of the Imitation of Christ in the writings of Søren Kierkegaard.

The Approach to Primary Sources

A word is in order concerning the approach which will be taken to the primary sources. The puzzle of Kierkegaard's unusual authorship has been the occasion for numerous books. The puzzle remains. This short statement will merely indicate the writer's stance on some key issues. It is not designed as a defense of that stance, nor does it seek to vindicate any one particular school of interpretation.[26] To begin with, it must be said that these pages will not conduct the reader on a search for the historical Kierkegaard. Some biographical points are discussed where relevant. But no effort is made to discover the "real" Kierkegaard who supposedly lurks behind the printed words of his books. Such voyages of discovery can be fascinating and insightful. But they are not necessary in order to understand what Kierkegaard says in and intends by his writings. The printed words themselves are sufficiently significant and independently meaningful to engage and sustain the scholar's interest. Thus, Kierkegaard's extant authorship, rather than the author himself, provides the subject matter for this study.

It is said, further, that the particular perspective employed throughout this essay permits the writer to draw upon the whole of the Kierkegaardian literature. That is to say, no works are excluded as immature or aberrant by reason of date or overt appearance alone. The mainstream of Kierkegaard's thought is found in the headwaters as well as at its estuary. Granted, some early currents alter with time, and some turbulences occur later. But, although these are noteworthy and in some instances decisive, they are considered relatively undisturbing to the main direction of his thought. It is herein asserted that there is a cohesive unity which can be discerned throughout the apparently disparate elements of his authorship, and amidst the complexity of pseudonymous disguises, indirect communication, and other creative literary techniques which Kierkegaard employed. However, the latitude which such an assertion allows is not misused in this essay. Any material drawn from so-called "peripheral" works (those works -usually the early and later writings- considered by some authorities to be outside the mainstream of Kierkegaard's thought[27]) is accompanied by supporting material taken from other central works. This same principle applies also to citations from Kierkegaard's Papers, since this material is often difficult to assess. When necessary, documentation from peripheral writings is explained in footnotes. In keeping with the expressed methodology of this essay, particular attention is paid to the documentation which is drawn in most cases from a wide variety and number of Kierkegaard's books in order to provide comprehensive and accurate evidence for all conclusions.

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[26] Various viewpoints and their advocates are described by Aage Henriksen in *Kierkegaard Studies in Scandinavia* (Copenhagen, Munksgaard, 1951). A typical illustration of the contemporary debate on the authorship question is found in the disagreements between Hayo Gerdes and Per Lønning. (Compare Hayo Gerdes' book *Das Christusbild Søren Kierkegaards* [Düsseldorf-Köln, Eugen Diederichs Verlag, 1960, esp. pp. 7, 88] with Per Lønning's article "Søren Kierkegaards Kristusbillede" [*Kierkegaardiana*, IV, Copenhagen, Munksgaard, 1962, pp. 74-87, esp. p. 77ff.]).

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[27] See A. Henriksen, op. cit.

Technical Apparatus

Before proceeding to the text of this essay, some technical matters should be mentioned. All references to the Danish collected works of Kierkegaard are taken from Søren Kierkegaards *Samlede Værker*, ed. A.B. Drachmann, J.L. Heiberg, and H.O. Lange, first edition, fourteen volumes (excluding *Register*), Copenhagen, Gyldendalske Boghandels Forlag and Nordisk Forlag, 1901-1906. Since the pagination of the second edition of the *Samlede Værker* (1920-1936) varies from this first edition, it is emphasized that the first edition is used throughout. Almost all references to the Danish text of Kierkegaard's *Papers* are taken from *Søren Kierkegaards Papirer*, ed. P.A. Heiberg, V. Kuhr, and E. Torsting, second edition, numbered I-XI^3 (twenty volumes in all), Copenhagen, Gyldendalske Boghandel, Nordisk Forlag, 1909-1948. In a few cases, citations are taken from the first edition of Kierkegaard's *Papers*: *Af Søren Kierkegaards Efterladte Papirer*, ed. H.P. Barfod and H. Gottsched, nine volumes, Copenhagen, Reitzel, 1869-1881.

Following standard international practice, references to the *Samlede Værker* are cited by listing the volume number in Roman numerals and the page number in Arabic numerals. A reference to XIII 100 would be to volume thirteen, page one hundred. References to the *Papirer* are cited by giving the volume number in Roman numerals, the group-letter in capitals (A for journals, B for manuscripts and drafts, C for reading and study notes), and the specific entry number in Arabic numerals. Thus, a reference to II A 20 would be to volume two, group A, entry number twenty. Some volumes have more than one part. The part number will be indicated by an Arabic numeral following the volume number, e.g. VIII 1 A 150. For longer *Papirer* entries, the page number of the citation will be given in addition to the entry number, e.g. VIII 1 A 660, p. 313. Since references to the *Papirer* always include a capital letter to indicate group, and the *Samlede Værker* references never include any letters, the one source cannot be confused with the other.

Passages cited from the *Samlede Værker* and *Papirer* are given as they appear in those editions. In many cases the spelling is less economical and somewhat altered in comparison with today's Danish; for example, earlier *Kjærlighed* (note noun capitalization and additional letter) vs. today's *kærlighed*, *skolegaard* vs. *skolegård*, *mynster* vs. *mønster*, and so forth. Although the earlier renderings may appear somewhat cumbersome, they are not inconvenient or misleading. No attempt has been made to "modernize" the spelling in cited passages from earlier texts.

Footnote references to the English translations of Kierkegaard's works are listed according to the table of title abbreviations given at the end of this Introduction. *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* is listed as CUP, *Training in Christianity* as TC, and so on. All English translations cited directly or indirectly are accompanied by a reference to the location of that particular passage in the Danish text. The English translation is cited first with the Danish source given immediately after and enclosed in parentheses; for example, CUP 446 (VII 434), TC 187 (XII 175), etc. Where there is more than one translation available, the most accurate and communicative rendering of a particular passage has been selected. Some material, primary and secondary, is not available in English, or the existing translations are misleading or opaque. In these cases the Danish (or other) passage will be cited without an English counterpart, and the translation will be the writer's.

Unless otherwise indicated, all selections from the English Bible are taken from the Revised Standard Version (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1952).

TABLE OF ABBREVIATIONS OF PRIMARY SOURCES

When works by Kierkegaard are cited in footnotes, they are referred to by abbreviations. Given below is the list of abbreviations used and the full titles to which they refer.

AC	*Attack Upon Christendom*, tr. W. Lowrie. Boston: Beacon Press, 1959.
CD	*Christian Discourses*, tr. W. Lowrie. New York: Oxford University Press, A Galaxy Book, 1961.
COD	*The Concept of Dread*, tr. W. Lowrie. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957.
CUP	*Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, tr. D.F. Swenson and W. Lowrie. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1941.
Dru	*The Journals of Søren Kierkegaard*, ed. and tr. A. Dru. London: Oxford University Press, 1959.
ED	*Edifying Discourses* (in four volumes), tr. D.F. and L.M. Swenson. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House.
EO	*Either/Or* (in two volumes), tr. D.F. and L.M. Swenson. Garden City: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1959.
EP	*Af Søren Kierkegaards Efterladte Papirer*, ed. H.P. Barfod, H. Gottsched. Copenhagen: Reitzel, 1869-81.
FSE	*For Self-Examination*, tr. W. Lowrie. London: Oxford University Press, 1941.
FSE(H)	*For Self-Examination*, tr. E. and H. Hong. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1959.
FT	*Fear and Trembling*, tr. W. Lowrie. Garden City: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1953.
GA	*Of the Difference Between a Genius and an Apostle* in *The Present Age*, tr. A. Dru. New York: Harper Torchbook, 1962.
GS	*The Gospel of Suffering*, tr. D.F. and L.M. Swenson. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1948.
JFY	*Judge for Yourselves* in *For Self-Examination and Judge for Yourselves*, tr. W. Lowrie. London: Oxford University Press, 1941.

LOF	*What We Learn from the Lilies of the Field and the Birds of the Air* in *Gospel of Suffering*, tr. D.F. and L.M. Swenson. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1948.
OAR	*On Authority and Revelation*, tr. W. Lowrie. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955.
PA	*The Present Age*, tr. A. Dru. New York: Harper Torchbook, 1962.
PF	*Philosophical Fragments*, tr. D.F. Swenson. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958.
PH	*Purity of Heart*, tr. D.V. Steere. New York: Harpers, 1948.
POV	*The Point of View for My Work as an Author*, tr. W. Lowrie. New York: Harper Torchbook, 1962.
R	*Repetition*, tr. W. Lowrie. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946.
RDT	*Has a Man the Right to Let Himself Be Put to Death for the Truth?* in *Two Ethico-Religious Discourses* in *The Present Age*, tr. A. Dru. New York: Harper Torchbook, 1962.
Rohde	*The Diary*, tr. G.M. Andersen, ed. P.P. Rohde. New York: Philosophical Library, 1960.
SLW	*Stages on Life's Way*, tr. W. Lowrie. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1940.
SUD	*Sickness Unto Death* in *Fear and Trembling/Sickness Unto Death*, tr. W. Lowrie. Garden City: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1953.
TC	*Training in Christianity*, tr. W. Lowrie. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957.
TCS	*Thoughts on Crucial Situations in Human Life*, tr. D.F. Swenson. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1941.
TD	*Two Discourses at Communion on Fridays*, tr. W. Lowrie. In *For Self-Examination*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1944.
WL(H)	*Works of Love*, tr. H.and E. Hong. New York: Harpers, 1962.
WL(S)	*Works of Love*, tr. D.F. and L.M. Swenson. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946.

DIVISION ONE

THE CANDIDATE IMITATOR

THE CANDIDATE IMITATOR

INTRODUCTION

"Kierkegaard has interpreted the true meaning of human selfhood more accurately than any modern, and possibly than any previous, Christian theologian."[1] It is Reinhold Niebuhr who uses such high praise in assessing Kierkegaard's contribution to the body of literature often called theological anthropology, the analysis of man as he exists before God. Other equally bold, but much less complimentary evaluations of Kierkegaard's "psychological" insights are not difficult to find. No matter where one stands on this issue, it is clear that Kierkegaard pursued these topics during many hours of introspection and on many pages of print.[2] Even

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[1] Reinhold Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man, vol. I (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), p. 171.

[2] Kierkegaard's Journals are filled with penetrating comments on his own psyche and those of others. His Either/Or (1843) probes deeply into the dark corners of some men's minds. His Repetition (1843) earns its sub-title of "An Essay in Experimental Psychology." And his Concept of Dread (1844) is appropriately sub-titled "A Psychological Deliberation." The Sickness Unto Death (1849) deftly analyzes the intricate movements of the self as it struggles between victory and defeat. Other works could be cited.

Whether or not Kierkegaard was a psychologist depends on what is meant by "psychologist." Leaving such questions aside, it can safely be said that he was an astute observer of human behavior and a penetrating analyst of the various and devious motives behind such behavior. He was well acquainted with his own mental make-up, as is attested by clinically detached comments in his Journals on even his most disintegrated states of mind. And his powers of the casual reader of Kierkegaard notices the vastness and richness of Kierkegaard's reflections on the intricate and elusive movements of the human spirit. Able commentators such as Michael Wyschogrod assert that "the major part of Kierkegaard's effort is directed towards an exploration of the geography of human emotions."[4] And the noted Kierkegaard scholar David F. Swenson acclaims Kierkegaard's efforts and

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imagination were so great that he could insinuate himself accurately into the minds of others (real and invented) and observe their thoughts and emotions nearly first-hand. Furthermore, he was willing to use these experiences as a basis for some general opinions concerning the nature and activity of the mind in action. That he had some blind spots in his outlook seems clear. But on the whole, whether he was a psychologist or not, he was exceedingly wise in knowing the hearts and minds of men.

However, Kierkegaard respected the private mystery and elusive dynamism of each individual's interior life. He denied that any sweeping theorizing could adequately account for the radical singularity in any one given man. Kierkegaard said that "no science can state what the self is without stating it in perfectly general terms . . ." (COD 70. IV 347). And on the topic of the self's elusive dynamism, Kierkegaard had this to say:

> The most concrete content consciousness can have is its consciousness of itself, not the pure self-consciousness, but the self-consciousness which is so concrete that no author -not the most copious in his command of words, not the most consummate delineator of character- has ever been able to describe such a thing, although such a thing is what every man is. This self-consciousness is not contemplation; he who thinks that it is has not understood himself, for he sees that he himself is meanwhile in the process of becoming and so cannot be a finished product as the object of contemplation (COD 128. IV 408-409).

Whatever psychological insights Kierkegaard had were not used primarily to propound interesting theories about the self. Rather, Kierkegaard employed his insights directly and indirectly to turn his reader back upon himself, to open up to him the glory and task of his own specific life.

[4] Michael Wyschogrod, Kierkegaard and Heidegger (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1954), p. 50.

success in what he calls "mapping out the life of the spirit, the subjective life of the emotions and the will."[5]

Much of Kierkegaard's work deals directly or indirectly with the self as self and the self before God. This is an exceedingly demanding and often neglected field. The tantalizing yet thorny questions beckon. What is the self? Does it develop? How does it function? Although such questions are intriguing, their diffuse and inter-disciplinary nature does not make them favorites with scholars. But, since Kierkegaard attempts answers to these questions which bear importantly on his ideas concerning the Imitation of Christ, these questions must be herein discussed. Consequently, this Division will present some of Kierkegaard's ideas about what he called the self. Even those who have no special competence in the field of psychology can recall that within the area of so-called personality research the talk about "the self" has fallen in and out of fashion several times in the last hundred years. At various times, the people doing personality research have talked about the Freudian ego, the self-image, the phenomenal ego, and even the soul. By contrast, other groups have suscribed to such terms as the ghostless machine, the tabula rasa, and the empty organism. Then again, Harry Stack Sullivan warned his generation of psychologists against the subjective fallacy in psychological positivism. And more recently, Gordon W. Allport has sought to free the heirs of Wilhelm Max Wundt from "soulless psychology." The fortunes of the self have ebbed and flowed over the years and will no doubt continue to do so in the future.

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[5] David F. Swenson, Something About Kierkegaard (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1956), p. 26.

One is duly impressed by the range, depth, complexity and especially variety of psychological material dealing with the self.[6] Any comparison, contrast, or evaluation of views on the self with past or current trends is out of the question for this dissertation: both because of this writer's unfamiliarity with the details of the psychological literature, and also because it would not carry forward the central discussion of Kierkegaard's views on the Imitation of Christ. Only those of Kierkegaard's views on the self which relate to this theme of Imitation have been selected for presentation. And rather than attempt to adjudicate the overall accuracy or adequacy of these views, they are dealt with only in the context of their significance for Imitation. However, despite these limitations, the brilliance and interrelatedness of Kierkegaard's authorship provides us with rich and ample material.

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[6] Mention should be made of the mountains of material on the self and related topics which have been produced in recent years by other disciplines. A few samplings are listed below. Some so-called non-existentialist philosophers such as Dewey and Royce considered the self to be a necessary concept. And the vicissitudes of the self have been the focus of many so-called existentialists who write philosophy, novels, and drama, as well as create "protests" in the plastic arts: Sartre, Camus, and Francis Bacon (the painter), to name but three. In theology there continues the anthropological concern revived by the man-as-man theme in volume one of Reinhold Niebuhr's The Nature and Destiny of Man. In Christian moral philosophy, we have The Responsible Self by H. Richard Niebuhr. Legion are the various sociological, pseudo-sociological, and outright fictional accounts of how the pressures of a conformist mass society warp a man's self-awareness and self-respect. Then there are the homiletical offerings in the mold of Harry Emerson Fosdick's On Being a Real Person. In the counseling-oriented fields are books such as On Becoming a Person by Carl Rogers. There are also various hybrid books like those by Martin Buber, as well as Wayne E. Oates' Christ and Selfhood. Examples within any of these and other fields could be easily multiplied.

The following describes the specific approach which will be taken in this Division. Kierkegaard has said that the life of Jesus is the Pattern after which all Christians must seek to construct their lives.[7] The Christian obligation is the Imitation of Christ.[8] And he makes it clear that candidates for this Imitation can come from the ranks of "the mightiest and the humblest, the wisest and the simplest."[9] Yet, there are some requirements, which every would-be Christian must meet before he can begin to take up his task of following Jesus. Kierkegaard says that only a person of "the age of maturity" can properly make the initial movement of faith.[10] And certain personal qualities must be actualized in a man before he can withstand the strenuous life of discipleship.[11] This Division will discuss what Kierkegaard meant by the maturity necessary for the decision of faith, and the personal qualities requisite for understanding and maintaining the quest of the Imitation of Christ.

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[7] TC 109 (XII 101).

[8] AC 280 (XIV 349).

[9] GS 16 (VIII 313).

[10] CUP 531-532 (VII 523-524).

[11] *Ibid.*

Before proceeding, however, a cautionary note must be sounded. It has already been mentioned that Kierkegaard respected the private mystery and elusive dynamism of each individual's interior life. He knew that no theory of the self could do more than give a general and abstract indication of something which is so specific and concrete, yet eminently idiosyncratic and intangible. But Kierkegaard speaks much about the self and offers a kind of geography of the human spirit. However, he did not fill in all the areas on the map, because he knew that some were inaccessible and unchartable. Kierkegaard is misunderstood if his respect for the unverbalizable aspects of the self is forgotten. Similarly, the following analysis of Kierkegaard's thought on the self is composed of various elements which have been isolated from his writings, given labels, and arranged in an orderly fashion. This method of approach, if poorly handled, can be fatal to Kierkegaard's meaning and intent. But, if properly done, it can be helpful and illuminating. The whole of the Kierkegaardian literature is a kind of tool for reeducating men into what it means to exist. Kierkegaard felt that his age had forgotten how to exist, and so devised a variety of literary techniques for awakening and reform. Many of Kierkegaard's books are lengthy, involved, and unusually constructed. But they exhibit an amazingly consistent and subtle sub-structure which illuminates much that he is trying to say in his personal and often indirect style. The analysis here presented is an attempt to uncover that sub-structure as it relates to the self. But this must be done through the use of words and concepts. And the reader might believe that, for example, the meaning of "mature selfhood" is exhausted by the concepts which describe it. Or, one might suspect that simple awareness of the proper concepts can lead to full selfhood. These would be mistaken interpretations. For Kierkegaard, the whole of the self is always greater than the sum of the concepts describing it. And a man who wishes to become a mature self is required to do more than entertain certain concepts. One must make the odd movements of risking, daring, venturing if one aspires to the inexpressible status of the fully human.

Yet there is a general direction which everyone must travel on the way to selfhood. Of course each person starts out from his own unique location and moves at his own peculiar pace and gait. Certainly, some men travel this way quite unconsciously and/or without the aid of concepts to guide them. Yet such guidance can be helpful in warning against false paths, disastrous short-cuts, and pitfalls. Concepts can help to keep the traveller safely on the way, and also to bring back the lost and strayed. Kierkegaard knew this and therefore was bold to speak out on selfhood. But he never forgot that he was dealing with much that is mysterious, unspeakable, and uniquely personal. The

Kierkegaardian literature takes this into account and makes use of it to establish significant contact with the reader. Unfortunately, any analytic approach to the literature loses the music of Kierkegaard's prose. But the analysis presented here is necessary to uncovering certain important ingredients and purposes of Kierkegaard's thought, as well as for rebuttal of some mistaken interpretations.

The material presented will include the following elements: (1) an analytic exposition of Kierkegaard's views on selected topics, and (2) a critical evaluation of various interpretations as to why Kierkegaard included these topics in his authorship. A comprehensive and accurate picture of Kierkegaard's views will be set forth, and the various interpretations will be done as objectively as possible. But it is stated in advance that it will be argued that the Kierkegaardian themes presented in this chapter were worked out by Kierkegaard in a Church-oriented context, and that he presented them in order to further the understanding and growth of the Christian life of Imitation. My point is that Kierkegaard took up these themes because his own age had distorted or forgotten them. In order to remove existing misconceptions and set Danish Christendom back on the path of true faith, Kierkegaard had to re-educate the populace on these basic prolegomena questions. He believed that only after this had been done, could his countrymen regain the proper relationship to the Christian life of Imitation of Christ.

A. THE HUMAN SELF AND THE LIFE-PATTERN

Introduction

This discussion of Kierkegaard's views on the human self and the life-pattern is divided into three parts. (1) The first section analyzes Kierkegaard's presentation of the human self in terms of self-consciousness, will, and responsibility. The proposal that Kierkegaard advanced these views for primarily theoretical reasons is rejected, and the assertion is made that these views were designed to enhance the growth of selfhood. (2) The next section deals with Kierkegaard's definition of the life-pattern as a style of living dominated by a master passion. In order to appropriate successfully any life-pattern, says Kierkegaard, a man must possess a well-developed human self. (3) The final section demonstrates that and how Kierkegaard applies his views on the human self and the life-pattern to furthering the Christian cause. He detailed the Christian life-pattern in terms of the Imitation of Christ. And he emphasized that only well-developed human selves could appropriate such a strenuous style of life. It is argued that Kierkegaard's point throughout is to make clear the specific demands of the Christian life, and to inform his countrymen that they must exhibit maturity of selfhood before they can attempt the life of Imitation.

1. The Human Self

Kierkegaard's mature views on the self are summarized in the first two-thirds of his book, The Sickness Unto

Death.[12] These pages present the reader with a careful and fascinating analysis of healthy selves, as well as a pathology of unfertilized, still-born, dwarfed, and disfigured selves. Such clinical language is entirely appropriate, since Kierkegaard speaks of a self's potentiality and birth through a process of synthesis,[13] of its "ripening" over the years,[14] and of its "scale of ascent" toward full growth.[15] This Kierkegaardian organic-developmental terminology is accompanied by a pathology index of the various crippling, stunting and fatal "sicknesses" which threaten the healthy self as it seeks to achieve fruition. Despite this terminology, I do not believe that Kierkegaard ever located the self "in" any particular part of the body, or that he ever spoke literally of the self as an "it" which directed certain aspects of a man's behavior. His purpose was not to propound any sort of "school" psychology. But it is clear that he felt it urgently important to comment on the self, and that he felt certain that his remarks could make meaningful and significant contact with some readers. Each reader can decide for himself whether or not Kierkegaard has "contacted" him -but only after reading the text carefully and with an open mind.

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[12] SUD 144-213 (XI 121-194).

[13] SUD 162 (XI 143).

[14] SUD 193 (XI 171).

[15] SUD 195 (XI 173).

To begin with, Kierkegaard states that "each human being is originally constituted as a potential self, and intended to become an actual self."[16] If this statement is transposed into Creator-creature language (which I am sure Kierkegaard would have used if he had been communicating directly rather than employing his apologetic tool of indirection and disguise), we can say that the Creator endows each man at birth with an undeveloped self, and intends that each of his creatures bring his self to fulfillment during his lifetime. Kierkegaard's brief mention of an "original potential self" is not given any expansion by him. He does not seem interested in isolating the self's proprium; nor is he concerned with definitions of any such entity as the self-in-itself. He appears to use the language about the self to inform people about themselves. If the language works, he uses it; or, perhaps more to the point, he uses the language which he hopes will work. Kierkegaard has little at stake in whether one speaks of the self's "becoming" in terms of organic-like growth or of actualized potentiality. This is not to say that he chose his words fortuitously, or that he meant nothing special by a "mature self." Not at all. His terminology is fashioned with great precision, and he carefully defined what he meant by a mature self. But this still does not indicate that he was engaged in any heady theoretical adventures. His discussion of the self is always anchored in the human problems he experienced first-hand and observed in others. The basic point to be made at this time is that Kierkegaard believed that each man has the possibility of developing through the years into a mature person. Let us, then, proceed with the discussion of Kierkegaard's views on the self using the language of thingness, location, development, and agency. But we shall remember that Kierkegaard is not arguing for any cause célèbre of ego psychology. His primary goal throughout is to be understood and taken seriously by his readers so that their individual selfhood might be enhanced.

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[16] XI 146.

This is my translation of the Danish passage, "Ethvert Menneske er nemlig primitivt anlagt som et Selv, bestemt til at blive sig self; . . ." Walter Lowrie translates it, "For every man is primitively planned to be a self, appointed to become oneself; . . ." (SUD 166). Both translations of this important passage can be debated. But I am critical of Lowrie's choice throughout this paragraph of the English word "primitive" -which has connotations of "crude" and "undisciplined"- to translate the Danish words formed on primitiv. These connotations are appropriate in this context, but they are not rich enough to convey Kierkegaard's total meaning. They fail to include primitiv's equally important connotations of "original" and "from the very beginning" -themes suggested by the Danish prefixes grund- and ur-. My interpretation of this passage incorporates both sets of connotations.

When discussing Kierkegaard's views on the self's development, it is helpful to speak of two aspects of the self: the human self and the various life-patterns which the human self can adopt.[17] The human self per se is constituted by those characteristics and powers which are neutral, disengaged, and uncommitted. A life-pattern is a particular style of life, a pattern of behavior and thought determined by a specific orientation to living. When the previously neutral human self commits itself to a particular life-pattern, it is that life-pattern which gives to the human self its specific shape, color, and direction. But it is possible to discuss the human self without direct reference to a specific life-pattern. An instance of this is Kierkegaard's discussion of the self in terms of self-consciousness and will.

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[17] Instead of speaking of the self in terms of a human self and an adopted life-pattern as I have done, Kierkegaard chose to speak of two selves: the human self and the life-pattern self. For example, when speaking of "the human self" (det menneskelige selv) which has opted for the Christian life-pattern, Kierkegaard called it "the

> Generally speaking, consciousness, i.e. consciousness of the self, is the decisive criterion of the self. The more consciousness, the more self; the more consciousness, the more will, and the more will the more self. A man who has no will at all has no self; the more will he has, the more consciousness of self he also has.[18]

This statement refers to the commonly observable phenomena concerning, for example, the child's first uses of the word

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theological self" (det theologiske selv) (SUD 210; XI 191). The word "self" appears in both connections. Kierkegaard's practice has the merit of integrating more closely the choosing self and the chosen life-pattern, whereas my terminology seems to keep these two more distinct. But Kierkegaard's terminology does populate such discussion with a lot of "selves" which can get in the way of his points about mature human selves, the decisions and options of the human self, and so forth. Both sets of terminology have their advantages and disadvantages. I do not feel that my modification of Kierkegaard's terms changes his meaning. And, since I am here focusing primarily on the movements of the human self, I find it helpful to distinguish clearly this concept from other "selves," and consequently have designed the terminology accordingly. (Division three deals explicitly with the theological self.)

[18] SUD 162 (XI 143).

"I" or the adolescent's discovery of his role in society. Whether it can be put into words or not, there is a time in the child's life when he sorts out what is "I" from what is mother, bed, rattle, and so forth. And teenagers are notorious for distinguishing "their" wants from those of their parents or society. Such things are clues that self-consciousness is present or budding. Also, the above citation from Kierkegaard points out the generally accepted fact that most strong-willed people usually exhibit a degree of self-awareness, self-evaluation, and self-direction which is often lacking in the vague indecisiveness of the person who is unsure of who he is or what he wants to do. In addition to these two criteria of selfhood -self-consciousness and will- Kierkegaard adds a third: responsibility. The development of a man's self is served if he "has so totally penetrated himself that every movement is attended by the consciousness of a responsibility for himself."[19] The self is benefited, says Kierkegaard, by the process whereby one learns to select, direct, and control his loyalties. This process roots a man solidly in the actual day-to-day world, and awakens in him further insight into his unitary nature and the role he must play in life. Kierkegaard says that thus is a man "concretized,"[20] and therein do you qualify to "win what is the chief thing in life, win yourself, acquire your own self."[21] In summary, we may conclude that, for Kierkegaard, the human self is developed if it is adequately conscious of its selfhood; that is, if a man is aware that he is a more or less independent agent, if he decides which loyalties he will serve, and if he directs his energies to those ends.

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[19] EO v.2 252 (II 222).

[20] EO v.2 252, SUD 162 (II 222, XI 143).

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[21] EO v.2 167 (II 148).

The last three quotations from Either/Or are taken from the context in which Kierkegaard is characterizing the ethical point of view, as distinct from the esthetic or religious. I have used this ethical material in the religious context of this discussion. Since I adopt this practice occasionally in this dissertation, I will now outline my justification for doing so. The most obvious justification is Kierkegaard's own assertion that, within the religious, the ethical is not eliminated, just dethroned. Anyone not acting concretely in his Christian life is labeled a mere admirer, in contrast to an active follower. (See, for example: TC 231ff.; XII 217ff.) Thus, the ethically undeveloped self is incapable of fulfilling the demands of discipleship. Another sort of justification is found in Kierkegaard's so-called "doctrine of the stages." This is not a doctrine. Unfortunately, it has been systematized to death, and even subjected to diagramatic schematization (Libuse L. Miller, In Search of the Self. Philadelphia, Muhlenberg Press, 1962, pp. ii-iii). This sort of linear, step-by-step interpretation violates Kierkegaard's expressed intent: "In the world of the spirit the various stages are not like towns on a route of travel." (CUP 250; VII 240.) Such interpretations do little justice to the subtle, overlapping, inter-permeating, simultaneously existing "stages" about which Kierkegaard spoke. A more accurate and sensitive study of Kierkegaard's "stages" is Valter Lindström's very thorough Stadiernas Teologi (Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1943). In any case, within the context of Kierkegaard's treatment of the stages, one can say that an adequate expression of the religious life is dependent upon such ethical ingredients as seriousness (alvor. See COD 133ff.; IV 412ff.) and sobriety (aedruelighed. See JY 107-157; XII 371-419.) which can be spoken of in the non-religious terms of an earnest sense of obligation and a willingness to act for a cause. This approach of Kierkegaard's goes far to eliminate many of the problems caused by the old, plaguing pseudo-distinctions between philosophical ethics and theological ethics. Kierkegaard avoided many of these problems by never forgetting that he was dealing with people, not with "fields" or "positions."

2. The Life-Pattern

Kierkegaard was fascinated by such personality types as the Master Thief, the Wandering Jew, the Amoral Seducer, and the Insatiable Esthete. Each one of them, claims Kierkegaard, exhibits a specific livsanskuelse. This word denotes a pattern of thought and behavior, an approach to life, a style of living dominated by some characteristic trend which harnesses a man's energies and directs them where it will. I will use the word "life-pattern" to translate livsanskuelse. According to Kierkegaard, each of the unusual personality types mentioned above is in the grip of a master passion which shapes that person's life according to its needs and appetites. To illustrate this point, let us examine the life-pattern of the Seducer. In the preface to "The Diary of a Seducer" (a portion of one of Kierkegaard's books), Kierkegaard quotes the line from Don Giovanni, "Sua passion' predominante è la giovin principiante" ("His ruling passion is the fresh young girl").[22] Let us assume that there is such a thing as a life-pattern of seducerhood. Or, if that language sounds too pre-behaviorist, we can say instead: let us assume that a man could act always so as to maximize his opportunities for seducing women. Seduction is his ruling passion. Such a man is not merely attracted to women in a vague, unreflective way. He has carefully weighed the pros and cons and has committed himself to a life-pattern of seducerhood. This is no chance or casual move on his part; he knows what he is doing. But such a vocation is not to be consummated by mere yearning. The seducer knows that any conquests worth mentioning are the result of carefully concocted schemes and precise timing. This is not child's play. If one is not willing to bear the labor of cultivation, one cannot expect to reap the fruits of harvest. Once having committed himself to such a life-pattern, the seducer is constantly re-evaluating past performances, polishing his style, working toward perfection in his chosen field of endeavor.[23] It is obvious that if a man does not have a well-developed human self, he will fail at reproducing the life-pattern of seducerhood. Such a man may meet with occasional successes. But to succeed consistently and with finesse over the long pull, a man must be equipped with a keen sense of self-awareness, an objective view of his strengths and weaknesses, the ability to fit his resources to a variety of situations, and the will to persevere against all odds. All these traits are characteristics of a well-developed human self, and are necessary to the appropriation of the life-pattern of seducerhood, or any other life-pattern for that matter.

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[22] EO v.1 298 (I 274).

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[23] If the resources of the twentieth century had been available to him, Kierkegaard might have winked as he soberly prescribed for this rigorous discipline a solid grounding in basic presuppositions culled from such classics as Frank Harris' My Life and Loves (New York: Grove Press, 1963). And he might have insisted slyly that in order to maintain one's proficiency, careful attention must be paid to the most recent technical literature on specialized topics, such as Mimi Sheraton's The Seducer's Cookbook (New York: Random House, 1963). Such is the seriousness of the task at hand.

For the purpose of this discussion, let us speak of the human self as an empty vessel. It is possible for this vessel to be incomplete or poorly fashioned. Early in life, the child is too immature to understand much of what goes on about him. His vessel is as yet incomplete. Furthermore, an adult can be said to have a poorly fashioned self if he is chronically undecided, out of touch with the world around him, a mystery even to himself, and merely going through the motions of living. However, it is possible for an adult to possess a self which can be spoken of as a fully-formed and solidly constructed vessel.[24]

In keeping with this image, let us represent any life-pattern as a liquid, and any human self committed to a life-pattern as a vessel filled with that particular liquid. The neutral, empty form of the human self (vessel) surveys the various life-patterns (liquids) and selects one as a way of life (vessel content). For example, if one wishes to become a seducer, he would (according to our image) pour the liquid of seducerhood into the empty vessel of his human self. That is, he would seek to bring his personal powers to bear on the task of becoming a successful seducer. However, if the vessel were incomplete or badly fashioned, it would not hold much liquid, or the liquid would run out and be wasted.[25] That is, if a man does not possess the proper self-awareness, self-evaluation, and self-discipline which seducerhood requires, he will not be much of a success. According to Kierkegaard, no man can succeed in maintaining his life-pattern if he has an immature or mal-constructed self. The well-developed self (which was just described as possessing self-consciousness, self-will, commitment, and self-directedness) is the necessary foundation upon which all life-patterns are built.

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[24] Of course, Kierkegaard acknowledges the manifold possibilities for variety among people. Some are mature in one area, child-like in another. Indecision on some questions can connote mature strength, rather than weakness. And so forth. My presentation of Kierkegaard's views is necessarily limited; but Kierkegaard's views are wide-ranging indeed.

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[25] Perhaps by this time the reader is growing a bit impatient with the image of the vessel and liquid. Does it seem too Lockean, too Herculean, too much like "Invictus"? Does it seem to overlook the determinants of heredity and environment? Rest assured that I am aware of the imperfections of the image. It was selected as a helpful illustrative tool; and few tools do all jobs well. However, I believe that with proper adaptations this image can be made to convey complex and accurate ideas.

Since people are inordinately complex and often strikingly unique, the vessel could be of varying sizes and shapes, thick or thin, decorated and glazed in the one case, crude and porous in another, delicate or utilitarian, and so on. And the life-pattern liquids could be of varying densities, viscosities, colors, consistencies, temperatures, tending to harden or crust over, giving the vessel's walls a protecting coating or perhaps corroding them. And any one vessel could contain mixtures of various liquids, interacting with one another, producing compounds, borrowing or losing ions, precipitating out new ingredients, producing combustion, fermenting. If the vessel were in linear motion, the denser portions would move backward. If the motion involved rotation, the denser portions would move away from the center. And so forth. The possibilities are good for expanding this vessel-liquid image to do justice to the complexities of human life. I am not committed to this image, but I think that it is quite adequate to the task. And I believe that such picture language is clearer and more precise than the high-flying approaches (which are impressive-looking but also fuzzier) which, for example, define the (healthy) self as "a condition in which all constituent aspects of an individual's existence are allowed to have full play in the conscious self" (Thomas Hanna, The Lyrical Existentialists, New York, Atheneum, 1962, p. 37).

3. Kierkegaard's Christian Application of the Themes of the Human Self and the Life-Pattern

The points I have been making about the life-pattern of seducerhood can be applied directly to Kierkegaard's ideas on the Christian life-pattern. To begin with, Kierkegaard undertook to describe for his readers the Christian life-pattern of the Imitation of Christ. On the basis of the New Testament record, he specified the style of life dominated by the master passion of following in Jesus' footsteps.[26] He took great care to spell out in concrete detail the particular mind-set and conduct which are and are not compatible (under normal circumstances) with the demands of Christian discipleship. (The special way in which Kierkegaard did this -as contrasted with some more traditional approaches to _Imitatio_- is presented in detail in Division three.) Also, Kierkegaard sought to make clear the sort of "divine context" within which the life of Imitation is to be carried out. According to Kierkegaard, the man who commits himself to the Christian life-pattern will see himself primarily as existing "before God." This means that no matter what his socio-economic status, no matter what his responsibilities to self, family, vocation, state or king -the Christian man pledges his dominant loyalty to Almighty God.

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[26] Repeating a theme familiar to his literature, Kierkegaard wrote in his _Journals_ that his era had forgotten or denied the "view of life" (_opfattelse af livet_) expressed in the New Testament (Dru 1256; X 4 A 581). The section below entitled "The Uses of Kierkegaard's Description of the Christian Life-pattern" will deal further with this topic (_Infra_ p. 77ff.).

> Christianity teaches that . . . every individual, whatever in other respects this individual may be, man, woman, serving-maid, minister of state, merchant, barber, student, etc. -this individual exists before God.[27]

Such a man would bring his already developed powers of self-consciousness to bear on the task of living before God, or as Kierkegaard also says, "living with God as the measure" of what is true and acceptable.[28] For example, someone committed to the Christian life-pattern does not picture man as cast adrift by chance in an absurd universe, but rather confesses God as Creator and Orderer of all things. Also, he condemns those who bend their wills toward ungodly ends. It is the Christian loyalties which he recognizes as his own and labors to appropriate. Similarly, any lapse is not seen as mere lapse, but is seen as sin against God. This, in brief, is Kierkegaard's delineation of the general context within which the Christian works to appropriate the life-pattern of Imitation.

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[27] SUD 216 (XI 197). Cf. WL^{H} 253 (IX 259).

[28] SUD 210-211 (XI 191-192).

The Danish word maalstok, here translated by "measure," denotes criterion, standard. The themes of "God as measure" vs. "man as measure" are frequently found in Kierkegaard's writings. For instance, his Works of Love constantly contrasts the ways of the world with the standard of eternity (evighedens maalstok) (WL^{H} 94, 339; IX 85, 349).

Division three of this dissertation will discuss Kierkegaard's views on Christ as Pattern (Christus som Forbillede). Forbillede means pattern, model, example, prototype, ideal. The similarity between maalstok and forbillede is readily apparent. It will be argued that Kierkegaard presents Christ the Pattern as the specific and concrete content for the standard of eternity, as the embodiment of what it means to live before God.

Allow me to engage in a relevant digression. Earlier I gave my rationale for employing the terms "human self" and "Christian life-pattern" to convey what Kierkegaard spoke of as the "human self" and the "theological self."[29] My terminology serves well to express Kierkegaard's idea that only a mature human self can successfully appropriate the Christian life-pattern. But at this stage of the discussion, I must reintroduce Kierkegaard's own terminology in order to make an important point. In Kierkegaard's opinion, the human self who exists in the divine context and appropriates the Christian life-pattern is not the same _qua self_ as the human self who appropriates, for example, the life-pattern of seducerhood. The human self's involvement with God transforms and enhances the self. The seducer's self remains a _human_ self, whereas the Christian self becomes a _theological_ self. And the theological self possesses qualities and perfections which are not present in the self whose life-pattern is not Christianity. For instance, any man who recognizes and confesses his need for God has achieved "man's highest perfection."[30] And according to Kierkegaard's

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[29] _Supra_ pp. 12-13.

[30] TD 1-18 (XII 265-279).

"scale of ascent" to complete selfhood, it is true that "the more conception of God, the more self," up to the point where the theological self achieves the final status of an "infinite self."[31] It is absolutely clear that for Kierkegaard the self's final fulfillment is attained only when it becomes a theological self; that is, when it sees itself as existing in the divine context and responds with humble gratitude and earnest dedication. From this perspective, it is misleading for authors to extract Kierkegaard's ideas on the self from their Christian context and speak of Kierkegaard's single individual apart from God. It seems incredible that Thomas Hanna could lump Kierkegaard together with Nietzsche and Camus, claiming that they speak of the self with "a common voice" which "so often seems identical."[32] It is like claiming that the racist and the emancipator speak with a "common voice" because, after all, they are both concerned about civil rights. Kierkegaard does deal extensively with many of the same issues and problems as Nietzsche and Camus, but the context of his work and the final conclusions he reaches are vastly different.[33]

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[31] SUD 211 (XI 192).

Kierkegaard's notion of the theological self is central to his thought, and lends support to my arguments concerning the Christian context of Kierkegaard's work on the self. Further discussion of this theme is found in Division three of this dissertation.

[32] Thomas Hanna, The Lyrical Existentialists (New York: Atheneum, 1962), p. 4. Cf. pp. 7, 12.

[33] This assertion is supported by the excellent comparison and contrast of Kierkegaard and Nietzsche found in

Kierkegaard conducted his work on the self in a specifically Christian context, consecrating his work to the healing of Danish Christendom. And he concluded that the theological self, not the human self, constitutes the highest level of selfhood. This concludes the digression, but the point must never be forgotten.

Previously we have noted that no one can successfully appropriate any life-pattern unless he first possesses a well-developed human self. This is true in the case of the seducer, and it is eminently true in the case of the Christian life-pattern. Kierkegaard was convinced that the sacredness and rigors of the Christian life could only be entered into by one who possesses a well-developed self which would enable him (1) to understand personally that he is God's creature living in God's world, (2) to commit himself knowledgeably and decisively to a life of Imitation, and (3) to strive intensely to fulfill that commitment. Kierkegaard leaves no doubt that all "flabby honorary Christians" are not worthy of the title "Christian."[34] Thus,

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Gregor Malantschuk's article "Kierkegaard and Nietzsche" in *A Kierkegaard Critique*, ed. H.A. Johnson and N. Thulstrup (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1962), pp. 116-129. See also the essay by Gottlieb Sodeur-Warzburg, *Kierkegaard and Nietzsche* (Tubingen, 1914) (tr. D. Tillson, in typed form in the Yale Divinity School Library). In addition, see Wolfgang Struve, *Die neuzeitliche Philosophie als Metaphysik der Subjektivität: Interpretationen zu Kierkegaard und Nietzsche* (Freiburg: K. Alber Verlag, 1948), and the collection of articles in *Kierkegaard e Nietzsche*, ed. E. Castelli (Milano: Fratelli Bocca, 1953).

[34] These, as well as others of Kierkegaard's judgmental themes must not be taken as in any way excluding the

Kierkegaard's formal categories of the self and the life-pattern are given Christian content by him and used to clarify, purge and instruct on behalf of the Church.

This point is clearly demonstrated in Kierkegaard's handling of that part of the Christian life which involves the Imitation of Christ. No vacant, drifting, absent mind

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non-intellectual or non-learned man from the ranks of the would-be Christians. Kierkegaard always insisted that Christianity is not limited to "the specially distinguished or the specially gifted" (POV 127; XIII 603). Rather, God is "quite unconcerned as to whether an individual be of high or low station, whether he be distinguished or wretched" (PH 185; VIII 220). In short: "Christianity certainly is accessible to all" (Rohde 122; VIII 1 A 9). Moreover, Kierkegaard often speaks movingly about his love and understanding of the common people and about their admirable capabilities for becoming Christians (Dru 980, 1170, 1367, POV 127; X 2 A 88, X 3 A 714, E.P. ix p. 221, XIII 603). He points up the Apostles' humble origins (CD 45, GA 92; X 47, XI 97). And he sharply castigates all those who think that Christianity requires "highness of intellect" (AC 287-288; XIV 356-357), "brains" (Rohde 118; VII 1 A 197), or "scholarship" (GS 16, SE (H) 35; VIII 313, XII 321-322). The sort of "development" of the human self which Kierkegaard talks about does not necessarily entail a high I.Q.

> My purpose is to make it difficult to become a Christian, yet not more difficult than it is, nor to make it difficult for stupid people, and easy for clever pates, but qualitatively difficult, and essentially difficult for every man equally . . . (CUP 495; VII 486).

The commands of Christianity fall both upon the bright and the dull. And many a simple man has walked the narrow and difficult path better than the learned man.

Apropos of these thoughts is the previously made point that even if one cannot grasp or verbalize a particular concept relating to Imitation, he may nevertheless be entirely capable of learning to Imitate and to Imitate loyally. Indeed, not all aspects of Imitation have corresponding concepts. Hence, the only way to discover the full meaning of Imitation is to Imitate. Such a way is open to all.

can even begin to recognize the seriousness of a life of attempted Imitation -much less make the initial commitment. Only someone well aware of the enormity and all-pervasiveness of the task can properly marshal his life in preparation for such strenuous discipleship. And any success in this endeavor of Imitation does not come about by neutrally admiring the model or by yearning after the heroes of the faith.[35] Only by the labor of steeling the will and harnessing the passions can one direct his life in the footsteps of the Master. And in view of the intense and persecuted life of Jesus -the one whom Christians are to imitate- it is clear that the title "Christian" is granted only to those who face unflinchingly the terror of the demands, apply them honestly and thoroughly to their own specific lives, and exert the necessary self-discipline to achieve obedience. This is not child's play. No "child" of any age has faculties enough to know what self-denial is; nor is he reflective enough to apply this general notion to his own particular self, to discover what specifically in himself must be denied; nor has he developed the resources for inflicting on himself the controls necessary to accomplish self-denial. Kierkegaard has said that

> becoming a Christian involves a decision which belongs to a much later age [than childhood] . . . It is a rape -be it ever so well meant- to force a child's existence into the decisive Christian categories.[36]

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[35] TC 231ff., etc. (XII 217ff., etc.).

[36] CUP 532 (VII 524).

In the interest of clarifying the nature of the Christian life, Kierkegaard made it absolutely clear that a man cannot become a candidate for the Imitation of Christ unless he is equipped with a keen sense of self-awareness, an objective evaluation of his strengths and weaknesses, the ability to fit his resources to a variety of situations, and the will to persevere against heavy odds.

Conclusion

It is certainly true that much of Kierkegaard's writing on the self appears detached and theoretical. But Kierkegaard's major treatise on the self, *The Sickness Unto Death*, is subtitled, "A Christian Psychological Exposition for Edification and Awakening." This is not, then, intended as just a psychological exposition; it is a *Christian* psychological exposition. And it is not presented merely for information and titilation; but for edification and awakening. In the preface to this book, Kierkegaard claims that

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The section from which this quote is taken is rich in pointing out the contrast between "childish" Christianity and "adult" Christianity (CUP 520-537; VII 511-529). One passage sets the tone in favor of adult Christianity:

> To cram Christianity into a child is something that cannot be done, for it is a general rule that everyone comprehends only what he has use for, and the child has no decisive use for Christianity (CUP 523. VII 514).

This theme is found elsewhere in Kierkegaard's writings. In *Sickness Unto Death* Kierkegaard states that a child is incapable of dreading what it is significant for a Christian to dread (SUD 145; XI 122-123). And in *Works of Love* Kierkegaard speaks of the transition from the child's "Me want -me -me" to the mature Christian realization that "me" is in fact the "thou" in the commands "Thou shalt . . ." (WL"98; IX 89). The point of all this is that only after "growing up" is one capable of understanding what Christianity is all about, much less adopting it as a way of life.

he will shun "the high aloofness of indifferent learning" which is so inimical to the Christian point of view where "everything, absolutely everything, should serve for edification."[37]

Kierkegaard believed that his age, and especially the Danish Church, was stricken with a disease which threatened to eat away selfhood. He responded to this situation by proposing the combined diagnosis and cure contained in the three points listed below:

1) No one can devote himself to the task of the Imitation of Christ unless he is first aware that he has a self to devote.

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[37] SUD 142-143 (XI 117-118).

Unfortunately, there is not a single English word which captures the meaning of the Danish term opbyggelig. "Edifying" is the best single word translation. "Edifying" can connote a kind of inner strengthening which has ingredient in it the religious encouragement of, "Look up, come alive, take heart! The Lord is with you." I believe this to be the general sense of "edification" in the passage quoted above. This point needs to be emphasized because of the fact that popular usage can turn the meaning of "edifying" into any sort of moral, intellectual, spiritual, or even satisfactional improvement. This covers a rather broad area, whereas I have been arguing that Kierkegaard restricted the telos of his authorship (although not the range of the authorship itself). This brief discussion illustrates my point. Literally, opbyggelig means "up-building." From Kierkegaard's point of view, this would not be a totally enjoyable process -especially if one is badly in need of repair. Kierkegaard built upward toward God, not upward toward self-realization, or upward in general. His eighteen Edifying Discourses (Opbyggelige Taler) cannot be classified as generally uplifting literature. They are decidedly devotional, homiletical pieces. Although Kierkegaard eventually replaced "Edifying" with "Christian" in the titles of his Discourses, he continued to affirm the specifically religious intent and content of these earlier "edifying" works. And study bears out his affirmation.

2) No one can understand the responsibility of Imitation without first having a sense of responsibility.

3) No one can bend his will to the demands of discipleship unless he first knows that he has a will and has learned to command it.

Consistently and emphatically Kierkegaard made the point that the movements of the self required by the Imitation of Christ -both the initial movement of commitment, and also the sustaining movements of maintenance- cannot be made by an incomplete or malformed self. And even though Kierkegaard's language is precisely and deliberately phrased, this does not impugn his sense of mission and urgency. Indeed, Kierkegaard referred to his commentary on the self as words "pronounced beside the sick-bed."[38] Kierkegaard employed his categories of the human self and the life-pattern in order to announce his diagnosis of Danish Christendom and to prescribe a cure.

B. THE UNDEVELOPED SELF AND ITS MATURATION

Introduction

The first portion of this Division dealt with what Kierkegaard means by a human self and a life-pattern, and how the successful appropriation of any life-pattern depends upon a mature self. This second portion will discuss Kierkegaard's concern for the development of the self.

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[38] SUD 142 (XI 117).

Some of Kierkegaard's analyses of deterrents to the self's development are presented. His devotion to the task of "translating" the masses into individuals is taken up. Once again, the focus throughout is to demonstrate that and how Kierkegaard employed his analysis of the self in the service of advancing the Christian life of the Imitation of Christ.

1. Threats to the Self's Development

Kierkegaard deplored the abundance of undeveloped selves among the masses (*mængden*) of sheep-like Danes.[1]

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[1] Alexander Dru translates *mængden* by "the masses," while Walter Lowrie generally prefers "the crowd." (See Dru's edition of Kierkegaard's *Journals* and Lowrie's translation of the first "Note" accompanying Kierkegaard's *The Point of View for My Work as an Author*.) Other translations such as "the common herd" or "the man in the street" are possible. But no one of these is adequate to the richness of Kierkegaard's meaning. Kierkegaard did not intend the socio-economic class overtones of "the masses," nor the connotation of disorder in "the crowd," nor the plainly quantitative meaning they both often carry. What Kierkegaard had in mind was a qualitative characteristic which could infect those from any class of society, whether singly or on epidemic scale. Those from *mængden* are generally inert, superficial, indolent, dull, easily led. In a sense, sheep-like. It is an accident that sheep are usually found in herds. The stray sheep is just as sheep-like as the one in the midst of the herd. Kierkegaard was describing an illness of the human spirit. How many and who are so infected at one time is an accident of history and not the center of Kierkegaard's concern.

Walter Kaufmann has forgotten this. In his striking Introduction to a recent printing of Kierkegaard's *The Present Age*, (Walter Kaufmann, "Introduction" to *The Present Age*, tr. Alexander Dru, New York, Harper Torchbook, 1962.) he says that Kierkegaard's hypothesis concerning his era (i.e. that it lacked passion) is shown to be a "mistake" by the dramatic political-revolutionary outbreaks in Europe soon after the book was published. But Kierkegaard was not proposing an hypothesis; he was diagnosing a sickness. And, while an hypothesis must fit over all existing circumstances, a diagnosis needs only fit those who are diseased. Even if Kierkegaard's words do not fit the French revolutionaries

He felt that any shoots of selfhood would be inadvertently trampled or intentionally bitten off at the roots by milling flocks of the comfortably mediocre and the respectably dull. Instead of valuing enthusiasm and individual expression, the age was said to have become "less impassioned and more petty."[2] It was mourned as an age in which no one was capable even of hating on a grand scale.[3] Unaware of their own potential, members of the common herd drift through life in a once-removed manner. They observe, but see little; are present, but are not quite all there.

> Like Leoporello they keep a list, but the point is what they lack; while Don Juan seduces girls and enjoys himself -Leoporello notes down the time, the places and a description of the girl.[4]

Not content to be a mere detached analyzer of his age, Kierkegaard wielded his analysis in the cause of Christianity. The heavy-footed prosaism and gross philistinism of the masses was, according to Kierkegaard, a hindrance to their religious responsiveness. For example, how would someone so constituted love God?

> The philistine's love of God begins . . . when the hands are comfortably folded on the stomach, and the head sinks back into the cushions of the

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(not to say that only clear and healthy heads take part in revolutions), he would still want to ask, "Do they fit you?"

[2] WL" 339 (IX 350).

[3] Dru 396 (III A 185).

[4] Dru 148. Cf. Dru 677 (II A 123. Cf. VIII A 168).

> chair, while the eyes, drunk with sleep, gaze heavily for a moment toward the ceiling.[5]

This is hardly an ideal response to the stirring Biblical admonition to "Love God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind."[6] But such is Kierkegaard's illustration of the low degree of religious intensity which can be expected from the undeveloped, unreflective masses. He called this the "vegetable life."[7] Warmed with comforts, cushioned from reflection, lulled into mediocrity, and doped with immediate satisfactions -the mass self is severely arrested in its development and rendered incapable of an adequate religious response.

In addition to the problems of the mass self, Kierkegaard spoke often of the grievous situation in which a person becomes "trivialized by his environment."[8] In a society which shares its treasures only with "selfless" men, there are many who are willing to pay the price. Such a man

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[5] II A 128.

Kierkegaard spoke of spidsborgerne which Dru translates as "the bourgeois" (Dru 149, 150; II A 127, 128). I have translated it as "the philistines," which is fair to the Danish word, and also avoids the middle-class or property-owning connotations of "bourgeois." Kierkegaard knew that philistinism was not limited to any one social or economic class.

[6] Matt. 22:37.

[7] Dru 150 (II A 128).

[8] TCS 15 (V 187). Cf. GS 207 (VIII 275).

This is Swenson's rendering of Kierkegaard's "af omgivelse laerte smaalighed" which is literally translated by "learned pettiness from the environment." (V 186) Swenson's use of the passive English verb seems to place the blame on the environment, while Kierkegaard's active verb form indicates that the one trivialized also bears part of the responsibility.

> forgets himself, . . . does not dare to believe in himself, finds it too venturesome a thing to be himself, far easier and safer to be like the others, to become an imitation, a number, a cipher in the crowd.[9]

Such a chameleon self adopts whatever characteristics are necessary to achieve his goals. If he imitates the leaders he will be advanced. If he achieves anonymity, no one will notice him and at least he will not be demoted. Always taking on the color of his environment, he has no color of his own. He has lost his self in the interest of gaining some advantage.

> He wills the approbation of good people -when they are in the majority and possess the power; that he will benefit the good cause -when it is so good as to confer some advantage upon him.[10]

This kind of man, says Kierkegaard, has sacrificed his self in order to gain the world. I need not say any more, since our own present age has been introduced anew to these ideas through such all-too-real types as the other-directed man, the organization man, and the commodity man.

Applying these insights to Danish Christendom, Kierkegaard makes the presumptuous and exclusive assertion that such chameleon selves are not capable of making the movements necessary for the Christian life. The consumer man feels no need for religion, since his world revolves around the acquisition of material objects. As Kierkegaard says, "that is too loose ground in which to use the lifting-jack of religion."[11] And how can a mirror-man, a mimic-man, be expected to achieve the self-awareness and self-evaluation which must precede a significant relationship to God?

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[9] SUD 167 (XI 147).

[10] PH 76 (VIII 149).

> He now acquires some little understanding of life, he learns to imitate the other men, noting how they manage to live, and so he too lives after a sort. In Christendom he too is a Christian, goes to church every Sunday, hears and understands the parson, yea, they understand one another; he dies; the parson introduces him into eternity for the price of $10.00 -but a self he was not, and a self he did not become.[12]

Also, Kierkegaard stresses that the rigors of the Christian life of Imitation require a strong character. And he makes it quite clear that if you wish to please the world you cannot be a Christian, since only "characterlessness is pleasing to the world."[13] And how many men have traded their "characters" for irredeemable promissory notes in the trivializing market place of the world? Inert within his chameleon body and disengaged from the drama of life, the undeveloped self is unaware of the glory of his humanity and of the task and gift of Christianity. Such things are too swift for his sluggish movements, too high for his stunted stature, too brilliant for his eyes accustomed only to shades of gray.

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[11] Dru 679 (VIII A 171).

[12] SUD 186 (XI 165).

[13] AC 279 (XIV 347).

The Kierkegaardian literature provides us with extremely rich material on the pressures which prevent and arrest the self's development. The two examples cited above are but representative of the many other pressures analyzed by Kierkegaard.[14] Those who experience such pressures today feel that Kierkegaard is addressing them directly. Some of Kierkegaard's current popularity no doubt stems from the fact that he provides such people with both a perspective from which to see their problem, and also a challenge to spur them on. The popular goal of such secular Kierkegaard enthusiasts seems to be something like "freedom from the System" or "intensified living." Kierkegaard's ideas are very susceptible to being drafted for such secular causes. It is true that Kierkegaard often spoke of various oppressive tyrannies in Denmark such as the depersonalization of Hegelianism or the mediocrity of Danish folk-culture. And those who crave intense living like to cite passages such as the one in which Kierkegaard says he has been reading a book "not only with my eyes but with my whole body."[15] Also, many of these Kierkegaardian themes have been discovered independently or simply echoed by agnostic or atheistic novelists and dramatists whose vast audience cherishes their words of enlightenment and goads to release. Camus' "stranger" -stranger to himself and to his world- is a classic example of this. And so are those neat and tidy folk so despised (yet envied) by Herman Hesse's Steppenwolf. It was all too natural and inevitable that Kierkegaard's Christian-oriented plea for selfhood should be secularized by various non-religious causes.

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[14] Kierkegaard also discusses the harm done to the person who succumbs to self-delusion about his talents and limitations (SUD 152, 168-170; XI 133, 148-150). For example, the unhappy man who has convinced himself of his happiness, hates the revealer of his lie and resists the painful truth which could begin him on the path to faith (SUD 176; XI 155). (SUD 176, Cf. 187, 189; XI 155, Cf. 166, 168.) Gone, too are the chances for selfhood for the fantastic-poetized man whose unanchored self has long since drifted away (SUD 164, 208. Cf. E/O v.2 207-208; XI 145-146, 208-209. Cf. II 222). There are untold numbers of passages -a veritable literature within a literature- in which Kierkegaard berates the officials of the Danish state church for discouraging selfhood by creating a dreamy atmosphere which excluded serious self-examination, personal repentance, concrete demands, clear-cut options, and risky decisions. Quite late in his authorship, Kierkegaard begins to sound the unfashionable theme of celibacy in which he claims that any indulgence of one's sexual appetites can block the growth of selfhood (Dru 1331; XI 1 A 259. Cf. G. Malantschuk, Kierkegaard's Way to the Truth, p. 92-94). Kierkegaard also points out many other assorted pressures detrimental to the self such as a deterministic-fatalistic outlook (SUD 173; XI 152-153), intellectualistic overemphasis on consciousness at the expense of the unconscious (Dru 1010; X2 A 258), superficial exteriority (Dru 944, 1042; X 1 A 279, X 2 A 401), anxious and proud hypocrisy (Dru 256; II A 338).

To be sure, Kierkegaard labored long and hard to create clarity in these complex and muddy areas. But he did not work merely in the interest of clarity, nor simply in order to slay the system, nor just to champion intense living. Nor would Kierkegaard be pleased to be remembered mainly as a sociological prophet who presaged today's "marketing orientation" with its accompanying ills of "upward-mobile patterns of accomodation." Certainly he wrote many wise words on these topics. But such topics were but penultimate concerns for him. The mature Kierkegaard never forgot that God was the central and final reference for his authorship. Those Kierkegaardian devotees who stop reading their muse when he starts sounding religious are left with a truncated Kierkegaard. The exclusively agnostic and atheistic uses of Kierkegaard's insights are a mockery of the religious use for which he originally intended them. In the discussion above concerning the mass self and the chameleon self, I have pointed out that and how Kierkegaard employed his hard-won psychological insights to the area of Christian faith. Although it is true, it is not enough to say that Kierkegaard's views on the self can be applied profitably to a variety of fields, including Christianity. It must be said emphatically that Kierkegaard consecrated these views to the service of Christianity, and that he himself employed them faithfully in this service.

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[15] Dru 199 (II A 745).

It is all well and good for a talented, yet uncommitted, novelist like Carson McCullers to borrow from Kierkegaard's The Sickness Unto Death. She does so in Clock without Hands, her moving chronicle of the loss and finding of the self of J.T. Malone whose life -colorless to the point of transparency- is born again as he slowly dies of leukemia.

> The next time the aide came around with the books, Malone returned the mystery and glanced at the other titles; his eyes were drawn to a book called Sickness Unto Death . . . Malone, after reading for a half hour, . . . dozed for a while. When he awoke he opened the book at random and began to read just to be reading. From the wilderness of print some lines struck his mind so that he was instantly awake. He read the lines again and

> then again: 'The greatest danger, that of losing one's self, may pass off quietly as if it were nothing; every other loss, that of an arm, a leg, five dollars, a wife, etc., is sure to be noticed.' . . . He had lost himself . . . he realized that surely. But how? When?[16]

In Carson McCullers' sensitive hands, the themes of the loss and regaining of the self can be poignant and telling. But Kierkegaard's thought ranged far beyond the earth-bound hope of self-discovery, self-acceptance, and self-affirmation. For, after all, The Sickness Unto Death is not simply a psychological or sociological study. One need look no further than the title page to see both that its authorship is assigned to Anti-Climacus (Kierkegaard's most specific and thorough-going Christian pseudonym), and also that it is subtitled "A Christian Psychological Exposition for Education and Awakening" (my underlining). The self which Kierkegaard sought to awake is destined for eternal life, not just self-affirmation. Certainly Kierkegaard's description of the now-famous "cipher man" is accurate and penetrating. But it is much more than that. For Kierkegaard this is still a cipher man before God, and he never discussed these topics outside of a decisively Christian context.[17]

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[16] Carson McCullers, Clock without Hands (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1961), p. 147. Cf. pp. 146-157.

[17] Kierkegaard's discussion of the cipher man is conducted within two of his most specifically New Testament Christian writings, The Gospel of Sufferings (GS 208; XI 276.) and The Sickness Unto Death (SUD 167; XI 147).

Another novelist who deals with the cipher man in a non-Christian context is William Styron.

Gifted writers such as Carson McCullers (not to mention popularizing hacks) do Kierkegaard a disservice by taking only half of what he has to offer. Kierkegaard regretted deeply that even in his own day his religious works were overlooked or disparaged, while his other writings were praised. Thus we must not forget that when the mature Kierkegaard speaks of the self, he does so in order to clarify the human requirements for an honestly conceived, full-blown, adult Christianity. The final word on Kierkegaard's discussion of the self must be his own final word:

> The truth is, one cannot become a Christian as a child; that is just as impossible as for a child to beget children. Becoming a Christian presupposes (according to the New Testament) being fully a man, what one might call in a physical sense maturity of manhood -in order then to become a Christian by breaking with everything to which one naturally clings. Becoming a Christian presupposes (according to the New Testament) a personal consciousness of sin and of oneself as a sinner. So one readily sees that this whole thing about becoming a Christian as a child . . . is neither more nor less than puerility . . .[18]

Those who use Kierkegaard in their fight against puerility in general should acknowledge his specifically Christian orientation in these matters. Kierkegaard advocated and

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> . . . When the people have been through hellfire and the crucible, and have suffered agony enough and grief, they'll be men again, human beings, not the bunch of smug contented hogs rooting at the trough. Ciphers without mind or soul or heart . . . We've sold our birthright . . . [for] a bunch of chromium junk from Detroit put together with chewing gum and spit! (William Styron, Set This House on Fire, New York: The New American Library, 1961, pp. 18-19.)

[18] AC 213 (XIV 253).

worked for the advancement of selfhood because he believed that the necessary foundation of a mature Christian faith is the very opposite of puerility.

2. Kierkegaard's Task of Translating the Masses into Individuals

Despite the various threats to the self's development, Kierkegaard asserted that the self can grow and flourish. He spoke of a process of "becoming" by which a person can mature in selfhood until he attains the status of a "fully existing individual."[19] Not only is this possible, but it is also obligatory. "It is the task of the self freely to become itself," said Kierkegaard.[20] Commenting on the prodigal son story in a marginal note in one of his Bibles, Kierkegaard remarks about the simplicity and fruitlessness of the son's "travel to a far country" (udenlandsreise). In contrast, Kierkegaard points out the great benefit which the son gained by the complex internal journey (indenlandsreise) by means of which he finally "came to himself."[21] This internal journey is often demanding, but it promises the great reward of selfhood.[22]

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[19] CUP 171-178, 74ff. COD 126-128, etc. (VII 157-166, 62ff. IV 407-410, etc.). Supra p. 9ff.

[20] SUD 168 (XI 148).

[21] VIII 2 C 36.

[22] I will not take up the process in detail since it has been discussed in many articles as well as several books. Hermann Diem deals with it in his book, Kierkegaard's Existential Dialectic, pp. 20ff. Although Thomas Hanna does

Kierkegaard felt qualified and commissioned to guide his readers through the labyrinth to selfhood -and beyond.[23] But to begin with he needed an audience. Since his task involved the awakening and developing of individual selves, he could not speak to the masses as masses. "It is impossible to edify or be edified en masse, even more impossible than to be 'in love en quatre' . . .[24] Yet it was to the masses, the many, that Kierkegaard wanted to speak, since it is they who so lack selfhood.

> 'The masses': that is really the aim of my polemic; and I learnt it from Socrates. I

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not deal adequately with the theological self, and even though his presentation of the self's process of becoming is tangled and elusive -I nevertheless recommend it (Thomas Hanna, op.cit., pp. 24-100). Hanna has managed to capture much of this tangled, elusive and essentially unified process which is lost when an interpreter breaks it down into a neat progression of separate movements.

[23] For many of his early years, Kierkegaard's own life had been confused, disintegrated, on the point of dissolution. Many Journal entries indicate his dissatisfaction with himself, his fits of moroseness, his fear of madness, his flirtations with suicide (Dru 51, 52, 53, 383, 462, 952, etc.; I A 156, I A 158, I A 161, III A 166, IV A 154, X I A 642, etc.). But through it all Kierkegaard learned about himself, discovered the idea for which he was willing to live and die, and devoted his amazing energies to the service of this idea. In 1851 Kierkegaard made the following claim: "I am, humanly speaking, the most advanced existence [den fremmeligste Existents] we have." (Dru 1185; X 4 A 33. Fremmelig indicates precociousness, brightness, a generally advanced nature.) This is not a hollow boast. Throughout his life he continued to learn and develop in his understanding of himself and "Divine Governance," achieving an intensity and integration of achievement rare in the recorded history of mankind. If one accepts Kierkegaard's definition of selfhood, then Kierkegaard himself is well qualified to speak on that subject.

[24] POV 127 (XIII 603).
See supra p. 30ff. for Kierkegaard's special use of "the masses."

> wish to make people aware, so that they do not squander and dissipate their lives.[25]

Consequently, Kierkegaard sought to devise a method whereby his books could both speak to many readers and also address each one of them personally. Given the nature of his task and the heterogeneity of his audience, it is not surprising that Kierkegaard baffled most of his readers. In many of his books Kierkegaard appears to have a definite sort of reader in mind and penetrates to what he hopes to be the core of that reader's life. It is a risky business, and the odds are slim that the appropriate reader will pick up the proper book at just the right time. And even though Kierkegaard yearned to reach the masses, he would rather make one direct hit than a thousand glancing blows. Of course, if Kierkegaard's book did fall into the right hands, it might not move the reader at all. Most books are bland, objective, dull. To overcome these obstacles, Kierkegaard designed a style of writing which ideally would arouse the reader's interest, stimulate his thought, and draw him along step by step to an insight which he not only acknowledges but appropriates in his own life. How successful he was in this endeavor cannot be measured in numbers, since it was not designed to operate that way. Kierkegaard wanted to stimulate and guide people to make significant qualitative changes in their own lives. If he accomplished this in one man, he would rest content.[26]

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[25] Dru 638 (VIII A 23). Cf. Dru 735, 856 (VIII A 549, IX B 63).

Kierkegaard employed a striking variety of media in his authorship of awakening. He published books with esthetic, ethical, philosophical, immanently religious, and decisively Christian content. He composed volumes of generally edifying discourses as well as bona fide sermons. His articles appeared frequently in newspapers and popular periodicals. In his last year of life he issued a series of tract-like pamphlets. This vast array of diversified material exhibits many different techniques for achieving significant contact with his readers. Skilled tactician that he was, Kierkegaard mounted his campaign using a variety of maneuvers: spying, infiltration, sneak attack from the rear, encirclement, and direct frontal assault. Sometimes he was soothing but often offensive, both Socratic and polemical, forthright and ironical, patiently pedagogic or violently angry, edifying and destructive, direct and devious. A single dominant theme of awakening resounded through all

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[26] These matters to which I briefly refer are generally discussed under the headings of Kierkegaard's dedication to "that single individual" (in the post-Regina sense), his method of "indirect communication," and his "existential dialectic." I will not discuss these topics further since they have become well-known and do not want for commentary. Some of the best secondary material on them in English is found in D.F. Swenson's Something About Kierkegaard, and Hermann Diem's Kierkegaard's Existential Dialectic. The intimate relationship between Kierkegaard's theory of communication and his deliberate literary style is discussed by Professor F.J. Billeskov Jansen, the Danish historian and interpreter of literature, in his book, Studier i Søren Kierkegaards Litteraere Kunst (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1951).

Kierkegaard's virtuoso performances on behalf of selfhood. But there were indeed many strings to his instrument and he could play in any key.

Intrinsically linked with the mission of his published works was Kierkegaard's own everyday life. He has said, "My life is an epigram calculated to make people aware."[27] And calculate he did. In order to insure the maximum impact of his earlier writings, he led a bizarre double life. And the ruses he used to cover his tracks and preserve the anonymity of his pseudonyms is a story in itself.[28] Also, Kierkegaard was willing to make the personal sacrifices entailed by his peculiar task. With amazing good cheer and contentment, though not without complaints,[29] Kierkegaard bore the burden of lonely isolation, Herculean labors, and severe harassment from the press and populace. Since he felt his cause of arousing and enlightening his fellow Danes

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[27] Dru 735. Cf. POV 35 (VIII A 549. Cf. XIII 538).

[28] See relevant sections throughout W. Lowrie's biography, Kierkegaard, especially pp. 286ff. (W. Lowrie, Kierkegaard, New York, Harper Torchbooks, 1962).

Other authors have employed pseudonyms to safeguard their writings from stereotyped identification with their previous works or their personal lives. The goal is to allow the ideas to be appraised on their own merits. A recent illustration of this is "Bogota," New Jersey's own "Mark Epernay," author of The McLandress Dimension (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1963). Also, some plays are placed in mythical-type settings so that the stage vehicle will not distract the audience from the ideas being presented. Bertolt Brecht's Arturo Ui, set in an unreal Chicago, illustrates this.

[29] Kierkegaard's Journals contain many references to his woes and the injustices perpetrated against him (Dru 588, 880, 928, 1287, etc.; VII A 98, X 1 A 120, X 1 A 476, X 5 A 72, etc.). Theodor Haecker uses this material, plus his hypothesis that Kierkegaard was a hunchback, to interpret Kierkegaard as a lonely, self-pitying, whining person who based his version of Christianity on his own personal problems. Haecker claims that Kierkegaard confused his own

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life with the life of Jesus. (Theodor Haecker, Kierkegaard the Cripple, New York, Philosophical Library, 1950, p. 48. See also pp. 44-45.) Of course, this may be true. And then again, it may be true that Christopher Columbus derived his round-world theory from a fixation on his mother whose cranium was decidedly brachycephalic. But, needless to say, one can determine the earth's shape without reference to Mrs. Columbus' cephalic index. And also one can determine the accuracy of Kierkegaard's views on Jesus' life without reference to his real or imagined hump, or any other aspects of his life. If Kierkegaard's "life of Jesus" passes the test of comparison with the New Testament, then Kierkegaard's tailoring problems matter little. It is plainly true that Kierkegaard's Jesus makes one uncomfortable, and for this reason many reject him. But it has yet to be shown that Kierkegaard's Jesus is other than the Jesus of the New Testament.

I believe that a central focus of the Kierkegaardian literature is the clarification of the nature of the Christian life, through reference to the life and teachings of Jesus as recorded in the New Testament. But so many readers of Kierkegaard get short-circuited before they realize this. They try to "understand" Kierkegaard rather than heed his message. Some feel that if they can write Kierkegaard off as a crank they can escape the commands of the New Testament. Not so. But it does make interesting reading and is the bread and butter of a kind of "scholarship." This game began rather informally during Kierkegaard's lifetime. And by 1857 a formal article appeared which accused Kierkegaard of being motivated in his authorship (especially in his "Attack Upon Christendom" literature) by a desire "to bring attention to himself" (Nyt Theologisk Tidsskrift, ed. C.E. Scharling and C.T. Englestoft, 1857, vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 203-204). Shortly thereafter, Professor Rasmus Nielsen, Kierkegaard's onetime confidant, defended him against this charge of exhibitionism in an article on Kierkegaard's "mental condition" (Rasmus Nielsen, "Om Søren Kierkegaard's 'Mentale Tilstand'," in Nordisk Universitets Tidskrift, 1858, pp. 1-29). Thus, the psychological literature on Kierkegaard was launched. It has not ceased to this day. For more recent examples of this sort of literature, see Sigurd Naesgaard, En Psykoanalyse af Søren Kierkegaard (Odense, Denmark, Poul Høymark, Psykoanalytisk Forlag, 1950) and also chapter one of Louis Dupré, Kierkegaard as Theologian (New York, Sheed and Ward, 1963). That this sort of literature has produced any net gain has yet to be shown.

to be just and urgent, he accepted with good grace the public indignities and personal sufferings resulting from service to this cause. It is not without reason that he referred to his life as "a kind of martyrdom."[30] Although Kierkegaard's secret and bloodless martyrdom educated him and enriched his writings, it did not serve to advance dramatically his goal of awakening and educating the masses. A "bloody" public martyrdom would qualify eminently for this task. Kierkegaard had long been fascinated by the idea of martyrdom.[31] He was well aware of the shock of self-recognition it could inflict on the consciences of those who perpetrate and witness it, leading them to re-examine their motives and principles. He said that the martyr has "the power to compel

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[30] Kierkegaard described his life as "a kind of martyrdom, only according to a new pattern" (*et slags martyrium, kun i et nyt mynster*)(Dru 1348; XI 1 A 484). As the butt of public and private jokes, he considered himself to be "the martyr of laughter" (Dru 880; X 1 A 120). Provincial Denmark's misunderstanding and lack of appreciation for what he was trying to do caused him to lament that he was being subjected to "the slow death of being trampled to death by geese, or that slow painful death which is practiced in distant countries: being abandoned to insects, . . ." (Dru 1348; XI 1 A 484). See also Dru 829 and 907 (IX A 352, X 1 A 309) for similar complaints of such martyrdom.

[31] Dru's edition of Kierkegaard's *Journals* includes twenty-seven separate entries dealing with martyrdom. In addition to those listed is Dru's index, see also Dru's entry numbers 644, 723, 856, 903, 1092, 1256, 1260, 1348, and *Papirer* II A 234, VIII 2 C 80 (VIII A 42, VIII A 482, IX B 63, X 1 A 247, X 3 A 13, X 4 A 581, X 4 A 596, XI 1 A 484). Kierkegaard frequently mentions the subject of martyrdom elsewhere in his published writings as well. See for example: CUP 208-209, 405f. (VII 195-196, 393f.), GS 157 (VIII 410), TC 219ff. (XII 206ff.), JFY 203-204 (XII 462-463), BOA 33ff. (VII 2 B 235 p. 39).

. . . others through his suffering . . . translating the masses into individuals."[32] This tactic fitted his goals perfectly. His sluggish era needed a martyr to jolt it into self-awareness,[33] and the Church needed a martyr to emancipate it from lies and lethargy.[34] It is a testimony to Kierkegaard's dedication to his task of awakening and education that he seriously considered setting in motion a series of events which would lead to his own death as a martyr.[35] He speculated that as a result of his martyrdom, the masses would be translated into individuals, attention would be drawn to the issues which he sought to clarify, and thereby the un-domesticated Christian truth would be heard and acknowledged. Whether or not he gave his life as a martyr is open to question.[36] But it is altogether certain that Kierkegaard directed his extravagant powers of genius with flaming zeal, stealthy cunning, and untold sacrifice on behalf of the task of awakening his age to the glory and responsibility of its humanity and to the gift and commands of Christianity.

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[32] Dru 856 (IX B 63).

[33] Dru 714, 787, 1040 (VIII A 418, IX A 126, X 2 A 392).

[34] Dru 1184, 638 (X 4 A 22, VIII A 23).

[35] Dru 638, 829, 905, 907, 1256, 1260, 1405 (VIII A 23, IX A 352, X 1 A 280, X 1 A 309, X 4 A 581, X 4 A 596, E.P. ix p. 370).

[36] Some authors consider Kierkegaard to be a martyr, attributing his untimely death at age 43 to the immense pressures he brought upon himself by his outspoken attack on Danish Christendom (W. Lowrie, Kierkegaard, pp. 587-588. T.H. Croxall, Kierkegaard Commentary, Harpers, 1956, p. 253). In contrast, Johannes Hohlenberg considered Kierkegaard to be a manic-depressive (Søren Kierkegaard, tr. T.H. Croxall, New York, Pantheon Books, 1954). And Theodor Haecker pictured Kierkegaard as a Quixotic figure driven to extremes by a persecution complex (Kierkegaard the Cripple, pp. 51-52. Cf. pp. 16, 31, 44-45).

3. The Christian Orientation of Kierkegaard's Task

The two preceding sections have shown Kierkegaard's judgment on his own present age: "People have quite forgotten what it is to exist."[37] Or, stated another way, the masses possess insufficiently developed selves. Also, Kierkegaard's intense devotion to the task of developing those selves was noted. We observed him at work carefully diagnosing the causes responsible for the self's failure to mature. And some of the techniques which he employed to awaken and educate his readers to full selfhood have been mentioned. Throughout this discussion I have been making the point that Kierkegaard undertook this task of awakening for precisely religious reasons. This point will now be elucidated further.

The central reason why Kierkegaard took so seriously his work about and on behalf of the mature self was because he felt it represented the true status of a man in relationship to God. According to Kierkegaard, God creates men as individual selves and intends that they see themselves as such.[38] It is God's great and gracious gift to mankind that he constitutes men as individuals and purposes that they function in this way.[39] Unlike a dictator, God does not desire that his people follow him in a vague, mechanical, unresponsive stupor.[40] God "thinks of each individual separately,"[41] and "the eyes of God" do not see "a crowd" but "He only sees each individual."[42] Consequently, a

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[37] TC 133 (XII 125).

[38] WL^{H} 252-255 (IX 257-261).

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[39] *Ibid*. Cf. Dru 639 (VIII A 24).

[40] WL" 253 (IX 259).

[41] ED v.IV 17 (V 89).

[42] Rohde 127 (X 3 A 476).

Language such as this has caused some criticism of Kierkegaard as an enemy of the gathered Church, as being opposed to ecclesia, a spoiler of koinonia. James Collins accuses Kierkegaard of stressing the individual to the detriment (or denial) of the communal aspect of the Church (James Collins, *The Mind of Kierkegaard*, Chicago, Henry Regnery Co., 1953, pp. 231, 238). In addition, claims Collins, Kierkegaard's emphasis on the individual hinders any social analysis, and also leaves no room for a philosophy of nature (James Collins, *The Existentialists*, Chicago, H. Regnery Co., 1952, pp. 9, 6). It seems that Kierkegaard's individual leaves casualties everywhere he goes.

But Kierkegaard never hesitated to speak in the large. He held that all men are sinners and that Jesus died to save all men. Therefore, we all exist in the community of deserved judgment and needed grace. The Fatherhood of God and the Lordship of Christ are themes found in the Kierkegaardian literature. Thus, all men are bound together in their common creaturehood and under one Lord. The fact that only "individuals" are self-conscious and coherent enough to grasp these ideas and their implications for living does not detract from the universal application of those ideas. In fact, Kierkegaard's analysis of the situation seems to provide a proper basis for a kind of ecclesiology. It is entirely in keeping with Kierkegaard's ideas to say that God loves many individuals, and that many individuals are united significantly by their common love of God and neighbor. Any other sort of visible fellowship which follows from this (for instance, for purposes of worship, mutual support in faith, work projects) must be based on this prior unity. If it is based only or primarily on things such as nationality, race, heritage, infant baptism, ecumenical charts, and the like, it

Christian must come to a realization of his singularity, his aloneness before God. He must accept the fact that his God-relation is such that he cannot escape from God by losing himself in the crowd.[43] A striking indication of Kierkegaard's view of man's individuality before God is his belief that "at each man's birth there comes into being an eternal vocation for him, expressly for him."[44] It is clear that no undeveloped self -such as the mass self or chameleon self- is capable of understanding this vast and intensely personal God-relationship, much less entering into it as a responsive participant.

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does not deserve the name "Christian" Church. Kierkegaard never denied the communal aspects of men under God. And he had nothing against their gathering together. But he did insist that those gatherings which call themselves "Christian" acknowledge and respond in obedience to the responsibility to serve God with all their hearts, souls, and minds. Only "individuals" are capable of this kind of service. And of course such individuals may gather together. But gatheredness as such is no substitute for this service to God. As Kierkegaard has said:

> The doctrine of the established Church, its organization, are both very good. Oh, but our lives -believe me, they are indeed very wretched . . . (Dru 1185; X 4 A 33).

It is interesting to note that this same sort of criticism of Kierkegaard is made from the social-political perspective. Herbert Marcuse, in his Reason and Revolution (Boston, Beacon Press, 1960, pp. 262-267), accuses Kierkegaard of proposing a radical atomistic-isolationistic-individualistic viewpoint which (had it been followed) would have been a drag on the socially liberating inertia (notably Marxism) building up in his day. This is an irrelevant comment. Kierkegaard's "individualism" is not the sort of notion that can be used as the basis for conventional implicational moves. Marcuse and Collins have done so, and thus have made the same mistake.

[43] PH 184-185, 188-190 (VIII 219-220, 222-224).

[44] PH 140, cf. 123 (VIII 191, cf. 179-180).

In order to illustrate this conclusion of Kierkegaard's, I will present his own demonstration of the undeveloped self's incapacity to enter into an awareness of sin. This is a crucial example, since, for Kierkegaard, an awareness of sin is the necessary first step toward living a decisively Christian life.[45] Kierkegaard said that "sin . . . means the concrete, since no one ever sins generally or abstractly."[46] But we have seen that the undeveloped self lives a generalized abstract life -unreflective drifting through life, unaware or uncaring when his baser motives dominate, and blind or insensitive to the evil done by his unthinking words and deeds. Such a person is simply not equipped to focus on his specific, concrete acts, to separate them from the blurred flow of his life. Can such a man know his sin? Since sins are never general, but always specific and concrete, the answer must be "no."

But every Sunday, as Kierkegaard well knew, Danish church pews were full of undeveloped selves who recited the standard confessions of sins. This confession "in general" is rejected by Kierkegaard as easier and unprofitable.

> The confession of sin in general is easier, but to trace a connection from this or that particular sin, apprehended clearly and precisely as if an impartial judge were casting up the account, this is a forced and painful road to travel -but

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[45] TCS 9, 24, 25, 27 (V 182, 192, 193, 194). TC 72 (XII 65). AC 213 (XIV 253). Rohde 183 (IX A 414). Dru 926 (X 1 A 467).

[46] COD 101 (IV 382).

> the painful road is nevertheless the right one, and the forced way is the profitable way.[47]

But it is precisely this very sort of self-analytic introspection, searing honesty, and steeled will of which the undeveloped self is incapable. Since he cannot know his sin, he cannot confess it.

The undeveloped self who perceives his sins in the abstract and confesses them in general, will also seek absolution in a similarly impersonal way. He may want to "drown his own guilt in that of the race,"[48] or avoid it by hiding behind "a screen of deliberation" or by losing himself in the crowd.[49] He will not escape for long, warns

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[47] TCS 31, cf. 1-41 (V 196, cf. 178-203).

[48] TCS 33 (V 198).

[49] PH 189 (VIII 223).
William F. Lynch, in his book Christ and Apollo, makes the same point: "We cannot accept a system of universal guilt in which the individual and individual sin do not survive." (W.F. Lynch, Christ and Apollo, New York, The New American Library of World Literature, Inc., 1963, p. 157.) Father Lynch parallels many other of Kierkegaard's points. For instance, he champions a living Christianity in contrast to a non-temporal, detached-doctrinal approach (op.cit., p. 59). And he emphasizes the need for single individuals:

> The human race is not a great complex entity called man, but many individual men, each leading his own separate, concrete life, each having its own limited, separate identity (op.cit., p. 20).

Father Lynch, as was Kierkegaard, is interested in the various means which can be employed to keep these points before the public. In his book, which deals primarily with the literary imagination, Father Lynch proposes that the medium of comedy serves best to remind us of our unique and finite humanity.

> [Comedy's] image of the finite is the most concrete, the most dense, of all the images created by the art of man.
>
> ....

Kierkegaard.

> Eternity places him where to be under pressure is to be alone, stripped of every excuse.[50]
>
> In eternity each shall render account as an individual.[51]

But, unfortunately, the undeveloped self is unable to see himself as an individual -this side of the grave, at least.

The progression of Kierkegaard's thought on this subject can be summarized as follows:

1. If a man does not know his sin, he cannot become a Christian.
2. If a man is not an individual, he cannot know his sin.

∴ 3. If a man is not an individual, he cannot become a Christian.

This one illustration of the undeveloped self's inability to respond to the central Christian idea of sin is indicative of Kierkegaard's general point concerning the impossibility of such a self's establishing a significant relationship to Christianity.

I will state it as bluntly as possible: unless a man possesses a mature self, he cannot be a Christian on

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> The one offense, therefore, which comedy cannot endure is that a man should forget that he is a man . . . (op.cit., pp. 104-105).

Although differing on some basic issues, these two men show a striking similarity on many points and on their concern for an effective, indirect medium for presenting their ideas.

[50] PH 192 (VIII 225).

[51] PH 185 (VIII 220).

Kierkegaard's terms. The category of "the individual" serves as a preliminary eliminator of prospective candidates for Christianity. Only mature selves are qualified for the vocation of Imitation. Kierkegaard pictures himself as standing guard at the narrow entrance (snaevring) to Christianity, granting admission to individuals only.

> 'The individual' is the category through which, in a religious respect, this age, all history, the human race as a whole, must pass. And he who stood at Thermopylae was not so secure in his position as I who have stood in defense of this narrow defile, 'the individual', . . .[52]

In fact, Kierkegaard was so insistent upon this point that he considered bland, immature selves as completely incapable of even approaching Christianity in order to appraise it!

> Existing subjectively with passion . . . is in general an absolute condition for presuming to have any opinion about Christianity.[53]

Since Kierkegaard bristles when any undeveloped self even considers forming an opinion about Christianity, we can imagine the intensity with which he held the view that immature selves are incapable of making the movements required by Christianity itself. Kierkegaard's keen sense of the inseparability of "Christianity" from the category of "the individual" is clearly seen in the following citations.

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[52] POV 128 (XIII 604).

This theme, in part, is the focus of a recent book on Kierkegaard's concept of man, appropriately titled The Narrow Pass (George Price, The Narrow Pass, New York, 1963, McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc.). The author makes some misleading statements, such as : "The whole of [Kierkegaard's] work has its unity in his concept of man." (op.cit., p. 11) He should have said ". . . in his concept of man-before-God." And, better yet, he should not have spoken so sweepingly and simply of such a complex personal authorship as Kierkegaard's. However, George Price does give the proper due to the theological dimension of Kierkegaard's concept of man. This book provides a needed extension of truncated treatments as Thomas Hanna's The Lyrical Existentialists (Supra pp. 22-24).

[53] CUP 249 (VII 238).

> 'The individual'; . . . Christianity stands and falls with that category.[54]
>
> 'The individual' . . . represents man's spiritual destiny.[55]
>
> Becoming a Christian presupposes . . . being fully a man.[56]
>
> . . . that which is the prime condition of religiousness, namely, to be a single individual man.[57]
>
> He [the all-knowing One] will deal only with the individual.[58]
>
> The doctrine of Christianity is the downfall of the race and the resurrection of the individual.[59]
>
> The category of the individual apart from the crowd . . . precisely is the Christian principle.[60]

Kierkegaard was strongly convinced that no man can become a Christian unless he first possesses a mature self. And Kierkegaard consecrated his immense talent to the cause of making these issues clear, and providing a context of thought and awareness within which selfhood could increase, so that drifting selves and nominal Christians might become Imitators of Christ.

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[54] Dru 723 (VIII A 482).

[55] Rohde 161 (X 5 A 133).

[56] AC 213 (XIV 253).

[57] POV 127 (XIII 603).

[58] PH 185 (VIII 220).

[59] Dru 1198 (X 4 A 188).

[60] Rohde 122 (VIII 1 A 9). Cf. PH 198, SUD 224ff., COD 134 (VIII 228-229, XI 204ff., IV 134).

Conclusion

Kierkegaard said that "God . . . providence, atonement, etc., only exist for an existing man."[61] And he also charged that people of his era had "forgotten how to exist."[62] The logic of these two assertions leads Kierkegaard inexorably to the conclusion that "the kind of men Christianity has in mind no longer exist."[63] This was the situation Kierkegaard faced. From this perspective we can see how important it was for him to translate the masses into individuals. For unless a man takes this first step, he cannot begin to approach the glories and tasks of the Christian life of the Imitation of Christ.

C. CHOICE AND THE OBJECT OF CHOICE

Introduction

We have already discussed Kierkegaard's ideas on the attainment of mature selfhood which enables a man to choose his intended way of life. Only such a mature man, claims Kierkegaard, is capable of setting out on the Christian way of life. At this point, the question might be asked: How does a man decide to become a Christian? In the first part of this section, we will analyze Kierkegaard's rejection of the evidence-argument approach to the decision for faith. In its place, as we shall see, Kierkegaard proposed the "leap of faith." The material is presented in the form of an argument which sets out to demonstrate that and how Kierkegaard employed these themes in the service of the Imitation of Christ.

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[61] Dru 605 (VII A 139).

[62] TC 133 (XII 125).

[63] Dru 1256 (X 4 A 581).

Having clarified the movement of faith, Kierkegaard provided his readers with a description of what the life of faith entailed. We have noted previously that Kierkegaard undertook to delineate what he considered to be the Christian life-pattern. Why did he do this? Part two of this section presents a critical analysis of some possible motives for Kierkegaard's undertaking. The conclusion reached is that Kierkegaard designed his delineation as a weapon to wield against nominal Christendom, in order to make way for and to make known the Christian life of Imitation.

1. The Anatomy of Choice

Kierkegaard asserts that man does in fact possess that "glorious jewel," choice.[1] Faced with a variety of options -concerning, for example, his way of life- it is man's prerogative to select the one he wishes. And not only is it man's prerogative to choose, but it is his obligation. "Man not only can choose, but . . . he must choose,"

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[1] LOF 228ff. (VIII 290ff.).

See also Gregor Malantschuk's detailed and suggestive article "The Dialectic of Freedom," reprinted in his book Kierkegaard's Way to the Truth, pp. 97-113.

Kierkegaard states.[2] If we ask why Kierkegaard believes that a man must choose, we are again given an answer in terms of mature selfhood. The avoidance of choice is characteristic of the listless, drifting immature self. Blown back and forth by external pressures and vague whims, he never comes to grips with his situation, never decisively purposes what he himself wants. Kierkegaard recognizes clearly that among those who are aware of their opportunity to choose, there are many who decline to do so. These are what Kierkegaard calls the "pitiful half-men," "the effeminate," "the flabby."[3] They are those whose aquatic feats are limited to paddling near the shore where they can be sure of keeping one foot on the bottom.[4] People like this find the ultimate expression of their passion in writing a love letter for someone else.[5]

In the name of Christianity, Kierkegaard derides this denial of man's gift of and responsibility for choice. The vague unawareness of choice and the flabby avoidance of choice must be eliminated if one is to "adventure a decisive action."[6] And Kierkegaard makes it clear that such "adventuring" provides the sole entrance to the Christian life.[7] The only sort of candidates which Kierkegaard accepts for Christianity are those who are willing to commit themselves to engage life fully and intensely. The Christian life is so constituted that it is open only to those "swimmers" who dare to push out into deep water -indeed, venturing out over 70,000 fathoms, supported only by the buoyancy of faith.[8] The move toward Christianity involves a definite and decisive choice. Kierkegaard was indeed the enemy of "the flabby" and the champion of "the individual" who chooses with passionate commitment. But he did not enunciate these principles in the interest of upgrading the intensity of Danish urges in general. He stated clearly that he was not giving an indiscriminate endorsement to any and all "unshaven passions," nor was he proposing an unspecified sort of "seriousness."[9] It was the Christian passions which he endorsed. And it was Christian seriousness which he proposed. Kierkegaard described the anatomy of choice in order to make clear the way toward Christianity -the way of choice open only to mature individuals. Of course there are those who deny that choice provides man with an ingress to Christian faith and life. They say this smacks of voluntarism and hints of Pelagius. This is enough to enrage those self-appointed guardians of the doctrine of God's omnipotence. However, those who are so inclined can discover evidence that Kierkegaard held that faith was God's direct gift to each individual, rather than a result of man's willing to believe. The chief support for this view could be drawn from Kierkegaard's Philosophical Fragments where he states explicitly that "faith is not an act of the will."[10] We read that "faith is itself a miracle"[11] received from "the Teacher" (God) in the God-given "Moment"[12] and dependent upon "the condition" which is also given by God.[13] On the other hand, however, Kierkegaard is famous for his discussions of "the leap of faith." He speaks of the "choice" by which the Christian "lays hold" of hope and rejects fear.[14] He speaks also of the Christian as one who "dares to hope,"[15] "dares" to believe,[16] and "wills to have faith."[17] Jesus' presence on earth is cited by Kierkegaard as that event which "puts to thee a choice, whether thou wilt believe Him or not."[18] Such material can be cited as evidence that Kierkegaard did in fact argue for man's choice in matters of faith. Also, there are those who interpret Kierkegaard as saying that God's gift and man's choice are in some way interwoven.[19] It is clear that Kierkegaard can be read in a variety of ways on this particular aspect of his thinking. It is my opinion that the familiar methods by which God's gift and man's free will are usually juxtaposed or interwoven do not do justice to the issues (human, theological, and linguistic) involved. In any case, no matter what Kierkegaard said about God's activity in the initial movement of faith, he never rejected the category of choice, nor denied that a man is anything less than an

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[2] LOF 229 (VIII 291).

[3] JFY (Ox) 116 (XII 382-383).

[4] Douglas Steere, in his Introduction to PH, p. 12.

[5] EO 368 (I 341).

[6] JFY (Ox) 200 (XII 459).

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[7] *Ibid.*, p. 59. *Infra* pp. 62ff.

[8] This familiar yet still-striking figure of the single swimmer alone on the sea was a favorite of Kierkegaard's. It appears in his writings in 1846 (CUP 208, 256; VII 195, 246), in 1847 in a book (WL 334; IX 344) and in his *Journals* (Dru 626; VII A 221) where he accuses Bishop Mynster of never having ventured so far out, and in 1850 (TC 63, 189; XII 56, 177).

[9] Dru 488 (V A 44). JFY (Ox) 115-116 (XII 381-382).

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[10] PF 50 (IV 227).

[11] PF 53 (IV 230).

[12] PF 51-52 (IV 228-230). Cf. PF 9-16 (IV 184-191).

[13] PF 86 (IV 265). Cf. 44ff. (IV 221ff.).

[14] WL (S) 202 (IX 238-239).

[15] WL^s 209 (IX 246).

[16] ED v.1 13 (IV 20).

[17] ED v.1 12-17 (IV 19-23).

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[18] TC 134 (XII 125).

[19] This is true of the viewpoint of Hayo Gerdes in his book, Das Christusbild Soren Kierkegaards, (Dusseldorf-Köln: Eugen Diederichs Verlag, 1960, pp. 27-46). Also, James Collins claims that, for Kierkegaard, "Faith is thus both a gift and a matter of free choice." (J. Collins, The Mind of Kierkegaard, Chicago, H. Regnery Co., 1953, p. 229.) H. Richard Niebuhr sums up Kierkegaard's position on this matter with the convenient passage from St. Paul's letter to the Philippians: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for God is at work in you . . ." (H. Richard Niebuhr, "Kierkegaard," Christianity and the Existentialists, ed. Carl Michalson, New York, Scribners, 1956, p. 40. Cf. op.cit., pp. 41-42).

However, James Brown is unwilling to let Kierkegaard off so easily. He says that any insistence upon faith as both gift and choice is an attempt to combine "two incommensurables." He concludes that Kierkegaard overemphasizes the role of the human will, making faith "a work . . . if not in its inception at least in its continuance." Brown wonders if this "over-intellectualizing of the concept of faith" might not be attributed to "some idiosyncrasy of Kierkegaard's spiritual constitution and history" (James Brown, Subject and Object in Modern Theology, New York, Macmillan, 1955, pp. 81-82).

active participant in the movement of faith.

Now that the stage has been set, let us observe Kierkegaard at work on the problems of faith. Kierkegaard was in favor of what can be called the "qualitative" movement to faith. But before Kierkegaard could establish this view, he had to demolish the reigning "quantitative" understanding of how faith is acquired. We turn first to Kierkegaard's delineation and demolition of this quantitative approach. Kierkegaard was concerned to expose and blockade those false roads and blind alleys which misleadingly claimed to lead to faith. In order to expose them, he had first to show clearly what they are and how people employ them. To this end he described the category of quantitative choice, providing his readers with general definitions as well as specific instances of how people employ this category with regard to faith.[20] Then, in order to blockade the false roads to faith, Kierkegaard rejected these specific instances with equally specific arguments.[21] And, more importantly, he developed some general principles which negated entirely the application of the category of quantitative choice in matters of faith. We will now look at Kierkegaard's handling of specific instances of the quantitative approach to faith. Costuming Kierkegaard's presentation in modern dress, we can summarize his main points as follows:

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[20] These themes dominate Kierkegaard's Philosophical Fragments and Concluding Unscientific Postscript.

[21] Ibid.

(1) Do you seek to bolster your faith by appeal to the Scriptures? But have you not heard, for example, that scholars and computers both conclude that not all of the "Pauline" epistles were written by St. Paul?[22]

(2) If you lean hard on the so-called Apostles' Creed, you must not yet have read about its post-Apostolic, piecemeal composition as chronicled by A.C. McGiffert.[23]

(3) The venerable age and international success of the institutional Church seems somehow less edifying when one recalls the membership drives led by such persuasive figures as Constantine, King Harald, Tomás de Torquemada, Hernando Cortés, and their later colonializing ancestors on other continents.[24]

(4) Do you wish to prove God's existence with snappy arguments? Is it possible you have not yet heard of Kant ("existence is not a predicate"),[25] or Kierkegaard (you "always reason from existence,

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[22] The New York Times, Nov. 7, 1963, vol. CXIII, no. 38, 641, p. 1.

[23] Arthur C. McGiffert, The Apostles' Creed (New York, G. Scribner's Sons, 1902).

[24] These last three points are taken from CUP 25-47 (VII 12-37).

[25] Immanuel Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, tr. F. Max Müller (New York, MacMillan, 1907), pp. 477-499.

> not toward existence"),[26] or A.J. Ayer ("only _a priori_ propositions . . . are logically certain").[27]

The above material offered in support of faith contains a common quantitative ingredient. That is, each proposed proof of Christianity's validity is based on familiar, observable or rational elements which are added together in such a way that faith is supposed to be evinced or buttressed.

Also, the rebuttals to these supposed proofs have a common ingredient: doubt. Even in the face of what is traditionally accepted or what is supported by massive evidence and iron-clad arguments -doubt creeps in and makes one uneasy. The most eloquently persuasive oratory is neutralized -if not crushed- by the small voice from the back of the hall saying, "But sir, isn't it just as possible that . . ." No matter the System's armor breastplate and visored helmet -the small but fatal arrow of doubt finds the Achilles heel. Kierkegaard held as a general principle that doubt is irrepressible and hence disabling to any quantitative approach to faith.

> It is impossible in the case of historical problems to reach an objective decision so certain that no doubt could disturb it.[28]

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[26] PF 31 (IV 207).

[27] A.J. Ayer, _Language, Truth and Logic_ (London, Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1936), p. 173.

[28] CUP 41 (VII 30).

The situation Kierkegaard had in mind is something like trying to reach a given destination by moving half the distance there each time. You never quite arrive. To illustrate his point, Kierkegaard employs the figure of the kite flyer who lets out more and more string, so that his kite soars higher and higher. But all the while he himself remains on the ground.[29] Another illustration pictures a jumper who takes such a long run to build up momentum that he has no energy left when the time comes to jump.[30] Kierkegaard's point is clear: one cannot be led to faith by the quantitative means of historical data, present-day evidence, or other arguments. Arguments and evidence may indeed be impressive and persuasive, but because of irrepressible doubt they cannot be conclusive on questions of faith.

Why did Kierkegaard labor so long and hard to clarify the category of quantitative choice and to show that it is not applicable to the movement of faith? Part of the answer lies in the fact that Kierkegaard believed that his analysis fit the facts of the actual human situation, and thus served the interests of clarity and truth. He hoped that his words might provide a context of epistemological maturity within which childish errors are put away and hard, cold facts are faced honestly. Was it too much to ask that men realize that faith (a passion) is not knowledge (a cognitive move)?

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[29] AC 232 (XIV 274-275).

[30] TCS 9 (V 183).

Is it not clear that belief is not a form of knowledge arrived at by a cognitive act coaxed or coerced by various kinds of quantitative demonstrations?[31] Cannot these categories be kept straight? But alas, they are continually getting mixed up so that each generation must take up anew the task of separating them. And while they are being untangled, the forgetful and confused world heralds the coming of such quantitative saviors of religion as Paley's natural theology[32] and Hartshorne's modal logic.[33] Meanwhile the opposite camp subjects its enemies to quantitative pseudo-arguments which pitch research results against religion, documented evil against God's goodness, and so forth. Kierkegaard would gnash his teeth that all his labor had gone for naught. Both such provers and disprovers of the truth of religion draw upon quantitative material which makes no impact upon the committed man's faith or the uncommitted man's doubt. Faith and doubt are simply not like that. To the would-be provers of faith and faith's object, Kierkegaard says:

> I will surely not attempt to prove God's existence; and even if I began I would never finish, and would in addition have to live constantly in

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[31] PF 69 (IV 247-248).

[32] William Paley, Natural Theology: or, Evidence of the Existence and Attributes of the Deity, Collected from the Appearance of Nature (Albany, Daniel and Samuel Whiting, 1803).

[33] Charles Hartshorne, The Logic of Perfection, (LaSalle, Illinois, Open Court Publishing Co., 1962).

> suspense, lest something so terrible should happen that my bit of proof would be demolished.[34]

To the would-be disprovers of faith, Kierkegaard says:

> Because of my confidence in this [i.e., in the passion of the movement of faith made by a qualitative leap] I make so bold as to defy all objections, even those that have not yet been made.[35] (my underlining)

Faith cannot prove that the earth is the center of the universe, any more than radio telescopes can disprove the reality of faith's object. These are both wrong-headed attempts which demonstrate the participants' confusion on the issue. Kierkegaard is not taking refuge in some nook as yet undisturbed by the probings of "science." He knows that science and religion operate on different "levels," in different "spheres," employ different human "organs." Because of this, they cannot legitimately attack or defend one another. The separate categories of faith and knowledge must be kept separate. If they are allowed to become confused with one another, an epistemological immaturity results, and the truth is not served.[36]

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[34] PF 33 (IV 209).

[35] PF 33 (IV 210). (my underlining)

[36] If Kierkegaard had held that faith and knowledge do operate on the same "level," he would never have been able to confess so boldly that his faith rules out in advance "even those [objections] which have not been made" (PF 33; IV 210). Since there is a category difference involved here, Kierkegaard is freed from the obligation to deal in serial fashion with each new objection as it comes along. Long before the advent of R.M. Hare's "blik," Kierkegaard provided us with a classic application of this point in his eminently clearheaded and faithful approach to the

Now that we have discussed Kierkegaard's analysis of and objections to the quantitative approach to belief, we will turn next to that which he proposed in its place: the "qualitative transition from non-belief to belief."[37] Kierkegaard's qualitative approach had to meet his own strict requirements. For instance, precluded is any dependence upon evidence which purports to increase the probability of the truth of belief, since "faith is by no means partial to probability."[38] Out of order, too, is the proposal that

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so-called problem of evil. Kierkegaard knows that if any event or thought is allowed to stand in support of a man's faith, then such things must also be allowed to count against that faith.

> The believer demands no proof for his expectation; 'for,' he says, 'if I could assume something to be a proof, then, when it proved my expectation, it would also disprove it (ED I 31-32; III 33).

Also, if the creature's powers of judgment are infected with pride, he will then feel justified in cursing God for the sorry shape of external affairs or renouncing his faith because of his plight. Man must realize that "God's thoughts are eternally higher than human thoughts" (GS 91; VIII 91). The dominant notes of open-eyed realism and joyful thanksgiving ring non-discordantly throughout Kierkegaard's discussion of such matters.

> The joy is: that now and at every moment, and at every future moment, it is eternally true that nothing has happened or can ever happen, even if the most distressingly conceived horror of the most morbid imagination were to become reality, nothing which can shake the belief that God is love: . . . (GS 71; VIII 352).
>
> If God is love, then He is also love in everything; love in that which you can understand, and love in that which you cannot understand (GS 70; VIII 352).

Kierkegaard never confused understanding with faith. Consequently he was able to deal with the problem of undesirable events in a faithful way, never denying such events, yet always praising God.

[37] CUP 15 (VII 3).

[38] PF 79 (IV 257). Cf. SLW 398 (VI 410).

a man can derive his faith from those Christians who preceded him, since each man "must always begin over again at the same point, at the beginning . . ."[39] Furthermore, the ideal of absolute certainty must be denied, because "in the certainty of belief there is always present a negated uncertainty."[40] In place of all these, Kierkegaard presented his now-famous "leap of faith." Since the leap has been so smothered with commentary, I will restrict specific discussion of it to a footnote, and move on to further analysis of Kierkegaard's intent in dealing with such matters.[41]

Kierkegaard says some caustic things about such probability.

> The man who never let go of probability never committed himself to God. All religious (not to say Christian) adventure is on the farther side of probability, is by letting go of probability (JFY 116; X 383).
>
> As Christianity abominates whoring, murder, thieving, and everything else that can defile a man, it recognizes still another sort of defilement, namely, paltry shrewdness, effeminate common sense, and shabby servitude to probability . . . (JFY 119; XII 385).

[39] TC 204 (XII 192). Cf. TC 202-206 (XII 190-194); ED v.1 13, 15 (IV 20, 21).

[40] PF 67 (IV 245).

[41] The leap of faith theme has been so bandied about that it has lost much of its original effectiveness. I will not add any more of my words to the pile of extant commentary, but will cite some representative passages to remind the reader of the content and flavor of Kierkegaard's own words on this now-familiar theme.

> And how does God's existence emerge from the proof? . . . As long as I keep hold on the proof, i.e. continue to demonstrate, the existence does not come out . . . ; but when I let go the proof, the existence is there. But this act of letting go is surely something; it is indeed a contribution of mine . . . it is a leap (PF 33-34; IV 210).

To discover why Kierkegaard concerned himself with these questions of faith and knowledge, we should note in the first place that Kierkegaard believed that the proposition on which the leap is based (i.e., that the qualitative movement of faith is not produced by a quantitative approximation process) is true on its own merits. He had subjected this proposition to "the naked dialectic of analysis" and found it not wanting.[42] But Kierkegaard did not champion this proposition just because it was true. Kierkegaard

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> The conclusion of belief is not so much a conclusion as a resolution (PF 69; IV 247).
>
> And faith is the ideality which resolves an *esse* into its *posse*, and then draws the conclusion inversely with passionate ardor. If the object of faith is the absurd, it is not the historic which is believed, but faith is the ideality which resolves an *esse* into a *non posse* -and then *will* believe it (SLW 398; VI 410).
>
> This exactly constitutes the conflict of faith -to believe without being able to understand (GS 77; VIII 357).
>
> I cannot acquire an immediate certainty as to whether I have faith -for to believe means precisely that dialectical hovering in fear and trembling (Dru 763; VIII A 587).
>
> Belief and doubt are not two forms of knowledge, . . . for neither of them is a cognitive act; they are opposite passions (PF 69; IV 248).
>
> Faith is the objective uncertainty due to the repulsion of the absurd held fast by the passion of inwardness . . . (CUP 540; VII 532).

I hope that these citations are sufficient to recreate the style and content of Kierkegaard's well-known leap of faith. (See further, D.F. Swenson, *Something About Kierkegaard*, pp. 54, 148-149, 162-163.)

[42] CUP 15 (VII 3).

hammered out this keen blade in order to wield it in the cause of Christianity. We have noted before Kierkegaard's insistence on the strenuous and demanding character of the Christian life.[43] In the notion of the leap of faith we see this demanding character applied also to the initial movement of commitment to such a life of faith. Only those can gain entrance to Christianity who are brave and daring enough to run the gauntlet which Kierkegaard sets up before the entrance to faith. Such a risky venture is offensive to the prudent folk who make their safety-first decisions only upon receipt of airtight proof. And the man who depends on the crowd for his opinions and support could not endure the believer's lonely isolation from familiar sources of authority and confidence.[44] The bold adventure toward faith is frightening to the timid soul. Such folk and others like them are repulsed by the leap and thus prevented from reaching Christianity. Kierkegaard regrets that the leap is an obstacle which prevents some men from coming to know God's love and law. But Kierkegaard does not regret the presence of the obstacle itself. For to remove the obstacle would be to dilute and misrepresent the faith.

> If I take the uncertainty away -in order to get a still greater certainty- then I do not get a believer in his humility, in fear and trembling, but I get an aesthetic coxcomb, a devil of a fellow who wishes, speaking loosely, to fraternize

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[43] Supra pp. 24-27, 57-62.

[44] CUP 15-16 (VII 3-4).

> with God, but who, speaking precisely, stands in no relationship to God whatever.[45]

The Christian life of the Imitation of Christ is one which places great demands on the believer. If one is not capable of making the passionate, initial choice to believe, he is certainly not equipped to maintain the passionate life of Imitation. And to allow such a "devil of a fellow" to masquerade under the name "Christian" -even in the hope that he will eventually develop- is to soil the name "Christian" and mislead others as to what Christianity is. Kierkegaard was not trying to establish a Christian clique. But he felt it quite fitting that the strenuous leap served as a kind of qualifying initiation rite which eliminates all but those at least potentially capable of living within the risks and demands of the Christian life of Imitation.

In addition to sensing these dangers of diluting permissiveness, Kierkegaard was alarmed by the confusion of faith with knowledge. Both the secular society and the Church of his day blurred the distinctions between faith (a passion) and knowledge (a cognitive act) so that the two often became identified with one another.[46] Kierkegaard knew that the presence of the quantitative approach creates an atmosphere within which the slothful and cynical can legitimately ask to be excused from believing until they check the results of the latest archeological dig or read the minutes of the most recent International Conference on Ontological Arguments. Also, Kierkegaard was gravely concerned lest the Church learn to rely on the vulnerable props of knowledge, thus neglecting its only true and unassailable (albeit invisible) foundation: the risk of faith. Kierkegaard knew that this practice could lead to a sense of (false) security within the Church -a kind of "vain conceit"[47] built up on the shaky platform of mere "superstitions"[48] and supported by arguments which were full of holes. Kierkegaard urged the Church to vacate these unsafe premises, because he knew that one little dialectical shove

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[45] CUP 407 (VII 396).

Kierkegaard believed that the leap

> prevents the erudite or anxious deliberation of approximation from enticing the individual into byways so that he becomes erudite instead of becoming a Christian, and in most cases a smatterer instead of becoming a Christian; for the decision lies in the subject (CUP 540; VII 532).

[46] The conflict between Kierkegaard and Hegelian influence is the best known illustration of this point. But since

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it has already received so much attention from scholars, I will relegate it to this brief footnote, and then more on to less trampled ground.

The Hegelians proposed the idea that Christianity's doctrines presented the absolute truths in a history-bound fashion which, after all, detracted from their universal character and limited their applicability. If you refine away the dross of specificity -eliminating such non-essentials as Jesus' birth, passion, death, and resurrection- you are left with the (Hegelian) truths in their pure, unalloyed state. The point is that all this is possible because of the fact that the truths of Christianity can be isolated and grasped by pure reason operating without faith. A new high priesthood was founded, not of the tribe of Levi, but of the tribe of Hegel. Kierkegaard considered this to be theologically false and philosophically disastrous, as well as humanly comic (CUP 30, VII 18; cf. Dru 723, VIII A 482).

[47] TC 203 (XII 191).

[48] CUP 35 (VII 24).

could topple the whole structure. And then where would they turn -those who had become accustomed to the security and comfort (albeit false) of their previous dwelling? Kierkegaard feared that they might be seriously and lastingly scarred by the experience which could so easily have been avoided.

In place of this falsely grounded security, Kierkegaard presented his own ideas on the fragile, tenuous, challenging, supremely personal and ultimately unchartable way to faith. Kierkegaard proposed that one did not absorb faith by merely keeping company with the parish congregation. "No man can give [faith] to another."[49] Rather, faith comes forth from the lonely solitude in which one man becomes more inward.[50] A man's faith is not born automatically after one reads the proper books and attends the required lectures. Of faith's issue, Kierkegaard has this to say: "What labors will attend the change, how convulsed with birth-pangs!"[52] No Christian ever arrived at faith on the magic carpet of blackboard proofs borne on the gentle zephyrs of dialectic. No indeed! The candidate for faith draws back from "the tremendous risk of the objective uncertainty," yet he believes in spite of it all because he is "gripped in the anguish and pain of sin" and swears -God help him- that he can do no other.[53] This is a far cry from the cool and calculated build-up of evidential-rational momentum which the quantitative approach claims will carry a man over into "faith." Kierkegaard knew that this kind of a dispassionate "faith" (quantitatively arrived at) is not the sort of soil in which the life of Imitation can take root and flourish.

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[49] ED v.1 13, 15 (IV 20, 21). Cf. TC 202-206 (XII 190-194).

[50] WL (S) 309 (IX 363-364).

[51] PF 27 (IV 202).

[52] CUP 41 (VII 30).

We ask again why Kierkegaard labored so diligently to clarify the muddy thinking concerning the movement of faith. Part of the answer, as we have seen, is found in Kierkegaard's commitment to a truthful epistemological maturity. But Kierkegaard's honest discussion of the movement of faith grew out of a religious context. Kierkegaard had compassion on the would-be Christian who sets out alone on the false roads, becomes lost and discouraged, and finally gives up the quest altogether. And Kierkegaard was angered by those Church officials who conduct people along a short-cut route which leads them to some lesser goal than New Testament Christianity of Imitation. Kierkegaard designed his work on the questions of faith as part of his methodical handling of prolegomena questions regarding Christianity. It was Kierkegaard's custom to move on to question number two only after he had properly answered question number one. Carefully and cautiously and thoroughly he dealt with the anatomy of choice before moving on to outline the Christian content which one might choose. In his Philosophical Fragments Kierkegaard deals with various epistemological problems in a detached, neutral context. This is all done before he undertakes "the task of investing the problem in historical costume" (i.e. Christianity) in his later book, Concluding Unscientific Postscript.[54] This appears as the logical, common sense order in which to handle the material. For it does little good to describe the life of Imitation, if no one knows how to approach it in order to carry it out. Kierkegaard knew this and dealt with these problems in their proper sequence. His point in doing this was to eliminate all but the true way to the life of faith. Unless Kierkegaard exposed the false paths for what they are, they would remain as a triple danger to the faith: they discourage seekers, encourage procrastinators, and lead to a misrepresentation of Christianity's life of Imitation.

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[53] CUP 188 (VII 176).

In this concluding citation, Kierkegaard, as always, expresses his own ideas best. (I have divided his long sentences into units in order to emphasize their content.)

> If the naked dialectical analysis reveals that no approximation to faith is possible,
>
> that an attempt to construct a quantitative approach to faith is a misunderstanding,
>
> and that any appearance of success in this endeavor is an illusion;
>
> if it is seen to be a temptation for the believer to concern himself with such considerations, a

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[54] CUP 14 (VII 2).

> temptation to be resisted with all his strength, lest he succeed . . . in replacing [faith's] passionate conviction by those probabilities and guarantees which he rejected when in the beginning he made the leap of faith, the qualitative transition from non-belief to belief -
>
> . . . then everyone who so understands the problem . . . must feel the difficulty of his position . . . .
>
> The spirit of dialectical fearlessness[55] is not so easily acquired, and the sense of isolation which remains despite the conviction of right, the sadness of the parting from admired and trustworthy authorities, is the line of demarcation which marks the threshold of its acquirement.[56]

The following three sentences sum up the points I have been arguing for throughout this section on the anatomy of choice. According to Kierkegaard, only the qualitative transition can move a man over the "line of demarcation" into the life of faith. He worked to eliminate false ways to Christianity and to delineate the true path to faith. Kierkegaard's work was undertaken in the interests of truth and in the service of those who seek to move over the threshold of choice into the life of the Imitation of Christ.

2. The Uses of Kierkegaard's Description of the Christian Life-Pattern

We have seen earlier that Kierkegaard believed that there is a specifiable Christian life-pattern.[57] It is possible "to know what Christianity is."[58] Kierkegaard believed that a perceptive reader of the New Testament could glean from its pages material specifying the shape of a Christian's confession, thoughts, deeds -in short, how a Christian ought to live. And we have also seen that for Kierkegaard the dominant element in the Christian life is the Imitation of Christ. The task of gathering this descriptive material from the New Testament is not a simple one, of course. The New Testament is not a casuistical handbook. But despite the difficulties involved in the undertaking, Kierkegaard firmly believed that there is a Christian life-pattern, that it was contained in the New Testament, and that it could be extracted from that source.

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[55] By "dialectical fearlessness" Kierkegaard means the disregard for all quick and shallow attempts to reach faith via reflection.

[56] CUP 15-16 (VII 3-4). Cf. CUP 29 (VII 17).

[57] *Supra* p. 20ff. Dru 1256, etc. (X 4 A 581, etc.).

And Kierkegaard believed that he himself had seen clearly this Christian life-pattern. He said that among those of his era, he knew best what true Christianity is.[59] He claims to have read the Bible "in a more heartfelt way"[60] or "in a more inward manner"[61] than his contemporaries. And he claims that God chose him as an "educator" for others, training and teaching him privately for the task.[62] On the basis of this, Kierkegaard declares boldly: "I know what Christianity is."[63] And not only did he claim to have this knowledge, he also boasted of possessing the intellectual and artistic-poetic gifts necessary for presenting it accurately, clearly, and effectively. Kierkegaard maintained that his era required a new sort of "maieutic" presentation of Christianity, and he believed that he was the "maieuticer."[64] The special poetic talent needed for this undertaking was, according to Kierkegaard, securely in his possession.

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[58] CUP 331-332 (VII 321-322). The special way in which the Christian life-pattern is "specified" and "known" is described in Division three.

[59] FSE (H) 17 (XII 311).

[60] TD 5 (XII 267).

[61] This is Gregor Malantschuk's more accurate translation of Kierkegaard's Danish phrase "paa en inderligere Maade" (G. Malantschuk, Kierkegaard's Way to the Truth, p. 76. Re: XII 267.). Other translations of the key term inderlig as sincere, fervent, intimate, and intense, are also possible. However, it is my opinion that "inward" best conveys the deep-going, personal, elusive meaning which Kierkegaard had in mind.

> With the help of my imagination . . . I can catch all the Christian qualifications at their most

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[62] Dru 645 (VIII A 43).

See also Kierkegaard's various comments on his relationship to what he called Styrelse. Walter Lowrie translates this by "Governance" or "Divine Governance," while David Swenson usually renders it by "Providence," and Mary Michelsen prefers "Divine Power." Whether imposed, freely chosen, or both; whether coming from without or from within; it is clear that Kierkegaard recognizes some sort of "guidance" in his life and authorship. See, for example, the chapter entitled "The Share Divine Governance Had in My Authorship" in POV 64-92 (XIII 556-576).

The reader should be forewarned, however, that the status of Kierkegaard's later autobiographical statements is in dispute today. Some interpreters accuse Kierkegaard of ex post facto unconscious distortion or deliberate dishonesty in his self-explanatory passages and books such as The Point of View for My Work as an Author. For a discussion of various interpretations of this material, see Aage Henriksen, Methods and Results of Kierkegaard Studies in Scandinavia (Copenhagen: Enjar Munksgaard, 1951, esp. pp. 7-12.). For an example of one scholar who distrusts Kierkegaard's autobiographical statements, see Lars Bejerholm, Meddelelsens Dialektik (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1962), esp. English summary, p. 318.

[63] POV 153 (XIII 505).

[64] Dru 644 (VIII A 42).

> accurate and most living. Our times clearly require that.[65]

In Kierkegaard's own words: "I know better what Christianity is, know better how to present it."[66] And there is ample evidence in his diary that he set out deliberately to describe the shape of the Christian life and thought as contained in the New Testament.[67] Also, various books devoted to this purpose openly declare this same descriptive intent.[68] Assuming that it could be done, believing that he had a clear view of the subject matter, and confident in his power to present it, Kierkegaard undertook the task of describing what Christianity is and what is entailed in the life-pattern of the Imitation of Christ.

Why did Kierkegaard present his readers with this picture of New Testament Christianity? Certain interpreters claim that his primary goal throughout this undertaking was what he himself called "human honesty" (menneskelig Redelighed). The Danish Kierkegaard scholar, Professor Johannes Sløk, for example, asserts that Kierkegaard was not a Christian or even a committed advocate of Christianity.[69]

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[65] Dru 704 (VIII A 347).

[66] FSE (H) 17 (XII 311).

[67] Dru 704, 849, 969, 1001, 1141, 1185, 1260, 1401 (VIII A 347, IX A 448, X 2 A 45, X 2 A 196, X 3 A 565, X 4 A 33, X 4 A 596, E.P. ix p. 364).

[68] PH 177-178 (VIII 215-216). TC 39 (XII 34). FSE (Ox) 17 (XII 311). JFY (Ox) 167 (XII 429). Cf. POV 35 (XIII 538).

[69] Professor Sløk presented these views to me during a private conversation at the University of Aarhus, Aarhus, Denmark in May of 1963.

Sløk holds that Kierkegaard was primarily an honest man who thought he knew what Christianity was, who felt that other Danes did not know it, and who was compelled solely by a sense of integrity to call this error to their attention.[70] To accomplish this, declares Sløk, Kierkegaard presented an accurate description of the Christian life-pattern which contrasted sharply with the current Danish Church life. And Kierkegaard himself offers ample material to support such a view of his authorship. There are places where Kierkegaard claims to want "nothing more" than "plain honesty."[71] And well-known are the many passages in which

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[70] Theodor Haecker criticizes Kierkegaard for exalting the category of "honesty." Haecker considers that honesty is a purely human trait applicable to immanent ethical autonomy and having no distinctive religious, much less Christian, significance. (This matter is taken up next in the text of this dissertation.) However, Haecker is willing to use the category of honesty to criticize Kierkegaard's treatment of Bishop Mynster. (Theodor Haecker, Kierkegaard the Cripple, pp. 49-52.) For Kierkegaard's rebuttal of Haecker's accusation on this point, see AC 14-15 (XIV 22-23). For a touching account of Kierkegaard's love and respect ("humanly speaking") for the Bishop, see Rohde 228 (IX A 83, 85).

In response to Haecker's first objection, I would say that it is entirely possible for a man to devote himself to the scholarly task of presenting an objectively honest picture of what the New Testament message is. Swedish motif research, as begun by Nathan Söderblom and carried out by Gustaf Aulén, is an illustration of this. But there is no reason why this task cannot be done by a man who appreciates the sacredness of his subject matter, or who believes that the world urgently needs this message. In Kierkegaard's case, his claim and achievement of honesty did not exclude his realization of the healing power of the message with which he dealt. Revealingly, he remarks that the temporally oppressed man could be spared suicide if he only could hear and accept the Christian message (GS 122-125; VIII 388-390).

[71] AC 37ff. (XIV 52-55).

Kierkegaard denies that he deserves to be called a Christian.[72] But even more apropos of the point at hand are the several passages where Kierkegaard discusses his task of describing Christianity objectively, and in this very context denies that he himself is a Christian or that he operates from Christian motives. Here is one example:

> What do I want? I want honesty! I do not represent Christian severity over against a given form of Christian mildness. By no means, far from it; I am neither severity nor mildness, I am human honesty.[73]

Such a viewpoint is in strict keeping with Kierkegaard's avowed intention of presenting Christianity as it is, allowing his readers to react to it as they will.

> It is [Christianity's] will that it be presented unchanged, in all its absoluteness, so that every man can weigh in his own mind whether he will have anything to do with it or not.[74]

The last two quotations reflect how scrupulously Kierkegaard intended to honor his commitment to the uncoercible freedom of choice which each human self possesses.

> In all eternity it is impossible for me to compel a person to accept an opinion, a conviction, a belief. But one thing I can do: I can compel him to take notice.[75]

Kierkegaard took great pains to present an objectively honest picture of Christianity. And I can find no instance in his public or private literature where he obviously or subtly argues the case of Christianity -pro or contra. He exhibits a proclivity for giving his readers a straightforward view of the life-pattern of Imitation, and then retiring from the scene.

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[72] FSE (Ox) 126, 176 (XII 391, 437-438). POV 153 (XIII 505). AC 282ff. (XIV 350ff.). Etc.

[73] XIV 52. Cited by D.F. Swenson in Something About Kierkegaard, p. 25. See also p. 5 in Swenson. Cf. Dru 969 (X 2 A 45). FSE (H) 17 (XII 311). TC 178, 221f. (XII 129, 207f.). WL 71* (IX 61). POV 153 (XIII 505). AC 189 (XIV 226).

[74] JFY (Ox) 167 (XII 429).

[75] POV 35 (XIII 538).

Those who want to see Kierkegaard as simply an advocate of clarity and honesty can find ample material to support their interpretation. But such material can never conclusively answer the question of what Kierkegaard really intended (whatever that means). The answer to this odd kind of question is not available to us, and perhaps was not known by Kierkegaard himself. What is available to us is a mass of ambiguous circumstantial evidence and some specific statements by Kierkegaard relating to his intentions. It seems to me that the most sensible approach is to follow Kierkegaard's own lead; that is, to isolate and analyze this available material and then let the matter rest. However, if after this is done one chooses to hazard a guess as to Kierkegaard's motives (as I have done), he is free to do so. But this can be done only with the sobering realization that a number of alternative hypotheses can be made to fit over the same evidence.

There are certain elements in Kierkegaard's thought which can lead one to doubt that he was "outside" the faith which he sought to describe so objectively. In a dramatic diary entry Kierkegaard denies that he is an "exceptional"

Christian and describes his authorship thus:

> As far as I am concerned it is rather as though I were to imagine a prince who laid hands upon a man known for his good parts and knowledge along a particular line, imprisoned him, and said to him: I wish you to expound this particular thing.[76]

Notice that Kierkegaard denies being an "exceptional" Christian, not a Christian. The passage cited could be interpreted to mean that Kierkegaard felt no personal commitment to the "particular thing" (i.e. Christianity) which he expounds. But this same passage could also signify Kierkegaard's surrender to God who is both the object of his faith, and the "jailer prince" who controls his movements and compels him to write.[77] The diary entry just cited was from the year 1849, and must be seen in the light of later entries which appear to indicate Kierkegaard's personal commitment to Christianity. In 1851 he confides that through coming to understand and present Christianity, he himself has learned to be a Christian.[78] In an entry from the following year, Kierkegaard tells how his relationship to Christianity has moved from knowledge of Christianity to faith in God.

> I have a direct relation to Christianity so that what I may suffer in the future does not belong under the rubric of intellectual enthusiasm for the question 'what is Christianity' (that was how I understood my task in 1848) but under that of suffering for the doctrine, so that in bearing it I have the direct support of Christianity.[79]

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[76] Dru 969 (X 2 A 45).

[77] Supra Note 62 on p. 79.

[78] Dru 1220 (X 4 A 229).

[79] Dru 1252 (X 4 A 560).

This is a significant and illuminating statement. It clearly records that Kierkegaard not only knows and presents Christianity, but that he is personally committed to it -even unto suffering for the cause. It may well be that the "early" Kierkegaard did accept a dispassionately conceived task of honestly describing Christianity. But there is ample evidence to indicate that as the "later" Kierkegaard grew in faith, he warmed to the descriptive task for more reasons than honesty.

There is also a kind of internal evidence which supports this developmental interpretation, adding its weight to the thesis that Kierkegaard was (or became) committed as well as honest. The rising tempo and volume of Kierkegaard's overall authorship seems to illustrate more than his lack of patience. If the initial keynote was "honesty" regarding what Christianity is, it soon shifted to proposing a "redefinition" of Christianity,[80] and finally became a campaign to "reintroduce" Christianity into Christendom.[81] The judgmental elements followed close behind the dictionary detachment. Far from dispassionate are Kierkegaard's expressed goals of wanting "to make people aware of Christianity,"[82] to "compel them to take notice,"[83] and finally, to "dispose of the illusion" of Christendom.[84] Such declarations are not the product of someone whose sole goal is to isolate and record a set of ideas in an honest fashion. Kierkegaard wielded this material in his active battle for Christianity and against Christendom.[85] It does not do

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[80] AC 284 (XIV 353).

[81] TC 39 (XII 34).
Students of Kierkegaard generally use the word "Christendom" to denote that promiscuous, self-satisfied form of Danish religion which Kierkegaard so despised. Kierkegaard himself called it variously "Christendom" (Christendom) or "official Christianity" (officiel Christendom). The word "Christianity" is ordinarily used to denote that sort of decisive New Testament Christianity which Kierkegaard believed to be the true faith. I will employ this terminology throughout.

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[82] Dru 1001 (X 2 A 196).

[83] POV 35 (XIII 538).

[84] AC 97 (XIV 119).

[85] In addition to the tedious, interminable, unresolvable (and therefore meaningless?) debates about the early and later Kierkegaard, there are other means which Churchmen might employ to "keep him in the fold." It might be argued that Kierkegaard's flirtation and possible encounter with martyrdom as a means to make people aware of Christianity was a sure sign of his dedication to the faith. Who else but a true believer would act this way? The answers come all too quickly: masochists, those whose thanatos instinct is overly dominant, various pathological types, etc.

Then a confessing Christian might argue that no one but a convinced Christian could compose such soaring hymns of faith as, for example, the later Christian discourses. Even a non-believing actor of consummate skill could not let loose the power and fervor and passion which course through Kierkegaard's Christian works. Or could he?

And so it continues. Everyone worries about Kierkegaard's faith and forgets his own. Kierkegaard thought it would happen this way, and cursed the thought.

When I allow myself the luxury of an opinion, I tend to place Kierkegaard among those who are granted a vision of Christianity which few ever receive. But was he a believer? That is another question altogether. It cannot be answered with the colorless, meaty, simple word-options like "committed or uncommitted," "believer or unbeliever." Kierkegaard's vision tormented him. Yet it strengthened him. It was his goad and his balm. He cursed it yet labored lovingly on its behalf. Is that faith? Kierkegaard lived high, ate well, drank better. Yet he suffered incalculably. Is that the life under law and grace? Can we wrap all these strands of his life together, place them on one pan of a justice to the vivace tempo and militant stance of Kierkegaard's authorship to call it merely an exercise in integrity. Nor was he simply engaged in a just war. This was nothing short of a crusade.

But people join crusades for a variety of motives. Let us look at the two central reasons which Kierkegaard presents to explain his participation in this crusade. First, he wished to show by comparison how wrong the current ideas about Christianity were. Kierkegaard was faced with a situation in which Danish Christendom had become soft and lazy, forgetting or rejecting the rigors of the life of Imitation.[86]

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scales (on the other pan of which is placed "faith") and thereby solve the riddle? No! We do not have any general definitions of faith. Nor do we know Kierkegaard that well. It is not just that he was so secretive. It is more that not all things are verbalizable. These sorts of questions are too fragile to be handled by the clumsy, lumbering machinery of theology as we know it. As long as theological endeavors are under the "tyranny of the verbalizable," where only the printable counts and the unspeakable is an embarrassment, then the riches of faith and faith's expression will remain unavailable to many.

[86] Danish Christendom, according to Kierkegaard, was composed of "honorary Christians" (TC 246; XII 231), "castrated Christians" (Dru 1174; X 3 A 591) who have "forgotten the point of Christianity" and substituted "worldly well-being and soft-hearted mediocrity" (Dru 1326; XI 1 A 193), "identifying being a Christian with culture" (Dru 1288; X 5 A 89). Even the chief bishop of Denmark had confused Christianity with the "bourgeois spirit" (Dru 626; VII A 221). Kierkegaard sets up the comparison: Christendom is related to Christianity as a belly-ache is related to cholera (FSE (Ox) 211; XII 469. For another caustic comparison, see AC 26; XIV 36). No one follows in Jesus' footsteps. The rigors of self-denial are forgotten (Dru 1326; XI 1 A 198), and the cross has become merely a child's toy (AC 165; XIV 198-199).

The blame for all this is laid squarely at the feet of the Church officials; those who should know the difference between New Testament Christianity and flabby Christendom.

The people were comfortable and wanted a comfortable religion. The clergy, desirous of the same sort of life, were apparently willing to furnish a compatible religion -getting well paid in the bargain. Kierkegaard sought to remove the plethora of deceit and misunderstanding which glutted Danish Christendom. By presenting a clear-cut picture of New Testament Christianity, Kierkegaard felt certain that the imposter Christendom would be exposed for the shabby imitation that it was.

> Wouldst thou have a picture of life in Christendom, showing how it compares with the Christian life? Then I will present to thee such a picture . . .[87]

Honesty? Yes. But do not forget that Kierkegaard said he undertook this work in order "to make room that God may come."[88] It was Kierkegaard's hope that his generation would study his presentation, check it with the New Testament, conclude that it was accurate, compare it with Danish Christendom, see the vast gap between the two, repent of

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These "silk and velvet priests" (AC 35; XIV 49), these "swindlers" (AC 117, 164; XIV 141, 198-199) represent Christianity as a "gentle doctrine" (TC 225; XII 211) in order to attract more people and insure their own comfortable way of life.

> The priests have invented under the name of Christianity a sweetmeat which has a delicious taste, for which men hand out their money with delight (AC 47; XIV 68).

Kierkegaard's invective is almost limitless, never dull, usually apt, often witty, always devastating. His verdict on the Danish Church is simple: "Christianity in these parts simply does not exist" (Dru 1258; X 4 A 586).

[87] JFY (Ox) 126 (XII 391).

[88] Dru 1401 (E.P. ix p. 364).

having strayed, and return to the true path. That was the plan: sound in theory, although unsuccessful in actual practice.[89] But the fact remains that before the truth can be received, error must be eliminated. Kierkegaard designed his honest description of Christianity as a weapon to rid Denmark of Christendom's errors. However, eliminating Christendom's errors was but a means to Kierkegaard's final end, which was to work for the re-establishment of true Christianity in Denmark.

If the first use of Kierkegaard's description of the Christian life-pattern was to convict, its second use was to rehabilitate. Once a man is convinced that Christendom is false, he might ask, "What is true Christianity?" Kierkegaard was ready with an answer: Imitation. In the preceding section it was said that Kierkegaard described the anatomy of choice before moving on to outline the Christian content which one might choose. We now see this in practice. If a man makes the initial move to choose Christianity, he should ask, "What next?" Kierkegaard can provide him with a clear-cut picture of what his chosen way of life entails: following Jesus. This ties in also with Kierkegaard's ideas on the mature self, since he has said that "only a serious personality is a real personality," and "to do something seriously one needs first of all to know what is the object to which seriousness is directed."[90] Kierkegaard works diligently to inform would-be Christians about the "object" to which they should direct their seriousness, viz. the Imitation of Christ. Kierkegaard's objectively honest description of the Biblical theme of the Imitation of Christ serves an essential function in his overall strategy. Having demolished the edifice of Christendom, he presents the plans on which true Christianity is to be constructed.

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[89] Kierkegaard fired his shot, then waited for the answering volley. It never came. At least there was not the mass indignation and protest he expected. He had hoped for an uproar indicating that people had understood his point. Rather, there was some fleeting annoyance, more puzzlement, and mostly it was business as usual.

Kierkegaard regrets this deeply. He had hoped for a general movement of repentance among Danish churchmen, once they saw the error of their ways. Their continued support of the status quo led Kierkegaard to take more vigorous measures. Unfortunately, these too were unsuccessful in his own day, and appear to have been forgotten by most of twentieth century Danish Christendom as well.

Thus, Kierkegaard's description of the Christian life-pattern can be seen as consecrated to the service of the Imitation of Christ. His two-pronged approach first dishonors Christendom. Next, he presents the true demands of the life of Imitation. Kierkegaard uses his "exact description of Christianity"[91] in both these activities. Utilizing the following illustrations, Kierkegaard sums up his dual role. Likening himself to a surveyor, Kierkegaard said that he established the boundaries of Christianity so that those outside may know they have strayed.[92] Next, describing himself as a cartographer, Kierkegaard states that his goal is to draw a "topographical map" of Christianity which would guide the pilgrim on the proper way.[93] Of course, surveyors and cartographers must be honest and accurate. Kierkegaard certainly was that. But I have argued further that Kierkegaard employed his transit and compass in the service of God, to make way for and to make known the Christian life of Imitation.

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[90] COD 133 (IV 415).

Although the specific context of this citation refers to a somewhat idealized self whose chosen "object" is himself, the point can legitimately be applied to a human self whose chosen "object" is the Christian life of Imitation.

[91] Dru 849 (IX A 448).

Conclusion

We have been discussing Kierkegaard's treatment of the anatomy of choice and the Christian life-pattern one can choose. In both cases it was shown that Kierkegaard employed a two-fold approach. First, he exposed and eliminated errors concerning these topics. Second, he presented clearly what he considered to be the truth. In the case of choice, Kierkegaard rejected the quantitative approach to faith and endorsed the qualitative leap. In the case of the Christian life, Kierkegaard repudiated official Christendom and proposed the Imitation of Christ. Having clarified the movement of faith, Kierkegaard provided his readers with a description of what the life of faith entails. The material of this section was presented in the form of an argument which set out to demonstrate that and how Kierkegaard employed these themes in the service of the Imitation of Christ.

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[92] PH 177-178 (VIII 215-216).

[93] Dru 849 (IX A 448).

CONCLUSION

This Division has conducted its readers on a search. We have been trying to locate the Candidate Imitator, the sort of person Kierkegaard considered qualified to undertake and sustain the demanding life of the Imitation of Christ. Our travels have taken us to the land of the Masses, where we looked in vain among the drifting, passionless, vegetable-like selves. Unsuccessful, too, was our sojourn among the Trivialized, those chameleon men who sell their selves for temporal gain. Down to the shore we went, hunting to no avail among contented folk splashing safely in the shallows, and among those who sit on the dry beach calculating whether it is possible for man to swim.

Kierkegaard knew we would not find the Candidate Imitator in these places. No man can become a Christian unless he possesses a mature self -a self endowed with intense subjective passions, objective self-consciousness, independent will, disciplined obedience. Such a man would not be found among the Masses or the empty selves of the Trivialized. Kierkegaard warns us that unless a man is willing to adventure a risky decision regarding the objectively uncertain, he will never make the initial commitment to Christianity. The Christian leaves the company of the beach-chair dialecticians, forsakes the lulling life of the wader. We see the Candidate Imitator striking out for deep water, beyond the last sandbar, bereft of water-wing, alone.

Why did Kierkegaard so painstakingly delineate the nature of the individual, the movement of choice, the Christian life-pattern?[94] Various answers to this question have been analyzed critically in this chapter. The conclusion I have reached is that Kierkegaard worked out these ideas in a Church-oriented context, and that he presented them in order to further the understanding and growth of the Christian life of Imitation. My point is that Kierkegaard took up these themes because he felt that his own era had distorted or forgotten them. Since only individuals can engage in the Christian life, Kierkegaard sought to translate the Danish masses into individuals. Since the confusion of faith and knowledge blockades the way to faith, Kierkegaard sought to remove the confusion. Since Christendom misrepresents the Christian life, Kierkegaard sought to discredit it and present a picture of true Christianity. In order to eliminate existing misconceptions and set Danish

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[94] A previously made point must not be forgotten here. Kierkegaard's "painstaking delineation" does not claim to cover all of the self's breadth and depth. He always respected the self's private mystery and elusive dynamism. Neither did he assert that possession of his delineation _in mente_ constituted mature selfhood. Nor did he deny that some mature selves achieved this status without benefit of such a delineation. But he did claim to possess some clear insights into what aids and what hinders the acquisition and maintenance of mature (human and theological) selfhood. See _supra_ pp. 6-8. Division three will show how this clear insight and acknowledged mystery are blended together when Kierkegaard describes the movements of the Imitating self.

Christendom back on the path of true faith, Kierkegaard had to re-educate the populace on these basic prolegomena questions. He believed that only after this had been done, could his countrymen regain the proper relationship to the Christian life of the Imitation of Christ.

DIVISION TWO

THE ONE IMITATED

FIRST PART

THE CONCRETE LIFE AND SPEECH OF JESUS

INTRODUCTION

The preceding Division dealt with the Candidate Imitator, the sort of person Kierkegaard considered capable of attempting the Imitation of Christ. This next Division will set forth some of Kierkegaard's ideas on the One Imitated, Jesus Christ, who establishes the pattern for the life of Imitation.

The first Section of this Part will explore what Kierkegaard meant when he said that Jesus lived concretely. In this discussion I will be using such phrases as Jesus' "flesh-and-blood existence," his "reality," his "concrete historical life." I do not intend to let loose the swarm of histories: pre- and meta- ; linear, cyclical, spiral; inevitable and absurd; inner and outer. Nor do I care to take on _Chronik_, _Historie_, and the members of the fecund Geschichte family. At the drop of a hat today, one finds himself surrounded by root metaphors, harassed by hedgehogs and foxes, and hung up on the hinge of history. Substantial issues there are. But all too often it is a _verflixte Geschichte_.

Before proceeding further, it should be said that Kierkegaard was sensitive to the issues and substance within this complex of ideas. He never forgot that Jesus thirsted, wept, suffered. Nor did he deny that Jesus was the eternal in time. The Kierkegaardian notion of contemporaneity with Christ is an exalted expression of the Christian's participation in the life of the pre-resurrection and post-resurrection Lord. Kierkegaard can move through this philosophical and theological labyrinth with precision, coherence, richness, and depth.

But Kierkegaard used his common sense, too. The aspect of Kierkegaard's thought on history with which this section deals is neither rarified nor clever. To say that Jesus was a concrete historical actuality is to say that Jesus was a man. When I say that Jesus was a man, I mean that he looked, acted, and spoke like other men. Jesus may have been the Second Adam, the perfect man, the Son of Man. Maybe so. But that is not the concern at this point. When I say that Jesus lived concretely, I mean that he took up space, lived in a certain time and place, did specific things like wash his face and swallow his food. It may be that Jesus is "fully man," "flesh of our flesh." But I am not here arguing for any creed. I just want to say that Jesus was a man.

Perhaps prose was never intended to communicate such unspeakable things.[1] "Christ was raised/ on this hill/ at a

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[1] The vicissitudes of the historical Jesus are reflected in early creedal formulations. We read solid sounding phrases such as "The One born of Mary the Virgin, the One crucified under Pontius Pilate, and buried," "Son of God and son of man," "homoousion with the Father . . . and homoousion with us." But on the other hand, there were Gnostics, Marcionites, Alexandrines. The accounts of the Nicene and Chalcedonian controversies describe the battles which raged over these and related topics.

The more recent work on the historical Jesus is chronicled in the following books now available in English: Albert Schweitzer's The Quest of the Historical Jesus (tr. W. Montgomery, New York, Macmillan, 1957. Covers from Reimarus to Wrede, roughly 1700-1900.), Maurice Goguel's The Life of Jesus (tr. O. Wyon, New York, Macmillan, 1933. Chapter One gives a summary review of the problem since Biblical times.), time's turn/ not on any hill/ but on this hill"[2] This conveys something of what I mean by Jesus' "specificity." Experience the glowing, magnetic intimacy of Rembrandt's

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James T. Robinson's *A New Quest for the Historical Jesus* (Naperville, Illinois, Allenson, 1959. Deals with the Bultmannians and the post-Bultmannians, and includes excellent bibliographical references.), and Heinz Zahrnt's *The Historical Jesus* (New York, Harper and Row, 1963. This short survey covers the main late nineteenth and twentieth century positions from Troeltsch to Ogden.).

Helpful, too, are the miscellaneous works listed below. A study of the Church's early insistence on Jesus' historicity is found in Oscar Cullmann's *Christ and Time* (tr. F.V. Filson, Philadelphia, Westminster, 1950). Karl Barth's emphasis on the humanity of the first person of the Trinity illustrates how one systematic theologian handles the problem (Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, Vol. I, Part I, tr. G.T. Thomson, Edinburgh, T. and T. Clark, 1955, esp. pp. 373ff.). Suggestive, too, is Carl L. Becker's article "What Are Historical Facts?" with its wry remark: "What then is the historical fact? Far be it from me to define so illusive and intangible a thing." (in *The Philosophy of History in Our Time*, ed. H. Meyerhoff, Garden City, New York, Doubleday Anchor Books, 1959, pp. 120-137, quote from p. 124.) Although overloaded with talk about "being," William F. Lynch's *Christ and Apollo* is a splendid outcry against the loss or disparagement of concreteness in thought and life.

If all these authors' words remain but words -refusing to reveal the reality they intend to convey or discuss- I can suggest another tack. Etienne Gilson has written a book called *Painting and Reality* (New York, Pantheon Books, Inc., 1957). In it he contrasts pairs of paintings which portray the same subject matter, but in different artistic styles. One of the paintings in a set presents a formalized, stilted, unreal ideality. Another manages to capture the fleeting, believable, encounterable, breathing reality. This, of course, is no simple matter. It is a matter of the artist's vision, intent, and gift, and of the viewer's response. And, then, there are realities and there are realities. But the concrete reality of which I speak is portrayed in some of these paintings, and is decidedly absent in others. Most gallery-goers have made similar comparisons themselves and know what I mean. To others I recommend a perusal of the plates in Gilson's book. Such artistry surpasses prose in ushering one into the presence of the unutterable.

[2] David Jones, *The Anathemata* (London, Faber and Faber, 1952), pp. 106-107. As cited in William F. Lynch, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

"Supper at Emmaus." There is Christ's tangible, solid, hand-in-the-side presence. Confront the bulbous toes, limp neck, and cruelly perforated hands and feet of Mantegna's "The Dead Christ." There is Jesus' humanity.

Kierkegaard did not want us to forget that Jesus was a man. He insisted that Jesus be thought of as encounterable. One cannot encounter Renan's idealized god; he can only be observed. One cannot encounter Hegel's God-Man; he can only be contemplated. But the Jesus we find in Kierkegaard's pages can be met -engagingly, invitingly, powerfully, expectantly, personally. This is so because Jesus was a man. Certainly Kierkegaard held that Jesus is the Son of God. And this gives a radical twist to the encounter. But it remains an encounter nonetheless. No matter what else he may be for Kierkegaard, Jesus is an encounterable man.

And this concrete man spoke concretely. This is the theme of section two of this chapter. If we can trust the Biblical records, we must conclude that some of what Jesus said is as clear as day. For instance: "Simon, are you asleep?"; "Take heart, it is I; have no fear."; "Do not steal."[3] Certainly dark and many-leveled passages abound in the New Testament. But there are enough straightforward sentences to carry the narrative along. Also, the New Testament's message of comfort and promise comes clear even amidst the ambiguities and puzzles of the text. And many commands to action could not be more explicitly and demandingly phrased. We know what these words mean. They refer to familiar things, address our personal needs and fears, oblige us to act in specific ways. These words are concrete. They may be spoken _sub specie aeterni_. But they are inseparably linked to men and their earth, are spoken from and to a context of life as we can know it. This, of course, does not deny the mystery and the wonder. These elements cloak Jesus' concrete words in a mantle of splendor and urgency. But the concreteness remains.

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[3] In order: Mark 14:37, Matt. 14:27, Mark 10:19.

This chapter is composed of variations on the basic themes here stated. We shall look analytically and critically at Kierkegaard's understanding of these matters -what he affirmed and what he denied. We shall consider how and why Kierkegaard defended so vigorously the concrete life and speech of Jesus. I will argue throughout that Kierkegaard mounted this defense in order to preserve and vivify the Christian command of the Imitation of Christ.

A. JESUS LIVED CONCRETELY

1. The Dehistoricizing Method and Its Fantastic Pictures of Jesus

Kierkegaard accused his fellow-countrymen in Denmark of subscribing to a false viewpoint concerning the life of Jesus. Those Danes who read Kierkegaard's books found themselves charged with holding an erroneously "fantastic picture of Christ."[4] Their picture of Jesus was called "fantastic" by Kierkegaard because it transformed the concrete historical life of Jesus into a fantasy. One way this was done was to "poetize" Jesus by stressing those aspects of his life which lend themselves to a poetic treatment characterized by romantic, imaginative interpretation. For example, Kierkegaard points out that a sentimental overstress on the baby Jesus leads to a kind of "Christmas pudding Christianity" which is not merely one-sided, but is in fact false, as well as being disgustingly saccharine. "Sheer effeminancy!" exclaims Kierkegaard.[5] Or, as a British translator puts it, "What twaddle!"[6] Kierkegaard condemns those who represent Jesus in such a way that they send their audience into a euphoric state characterized by a gentle clasping of the hands at the breast, a glazing of the eyes, and a sweet smile upon the lips. For such an audience, the solid historic Jesus has been poetized into a mere figment of fantasy.[7]

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[4] TC 103, 135 (XII 96, 127).

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[5] X A 305.

[6] Dru 1022 (X A 305).

[7] CD 181 (X 176).

Although Kierkegaard never read Ernest Renan's Life of Jesus, I believe that he would have readily placed it in the poetizing class. Using a monochromatic palette, Renan conjures up a pastel picture of Jesus smelling of cologne. Over and over again on these pages we encounter Jesus' "lovely face," "sweet voice," "charm of mind," and "beautiful discourses." (These phrases are quoted from Ernest Renan, The Life of Jesus, New York, Modern Library, 1927. The respective pages for the cited phrases are as follows: pp. 126, 125, 311, 310. Cf. pp. 120, 175, 186, 293, 308, 352.) Only the stark horror of Jesus' crucifixion forces Renan to abandon his cosmetic style. But this comes at the end of the book, and cannot save it from the indelibly poetic coloring caused by such elements as Renan's romanticizing of

A second way to convert the flesh-and-blood Jesus into a fantasy is to transform his life into a theological system. In this method, the theological expert (who often forgets his

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Jesus' love of nature ("his preaching...breathing...the perfume of the fields" - p. 186, cf. p. 114), and his relationship to women ("women...received him with eagerness," including Pontius Pilate's wife who "may have seen the gentle Galilean from some window of the palace" and later "perhaps" saw "this beautiful young man" in her "dreams" - pp. 175, 352, cf. pp. 120, 309, 322). It appears to me that the only open question concerning Kierkegaard's judgment of such a book is which epithet he would prefer: effeminancy or twaddle.

And yet from Kierkegaard's own use of the dramatic-literary mode to make vivid the life of Jesus, we can safely conclude that he would not condemn all such literary efforts. He attacks only those efforts which distort the Biblical picture of Jesus and which keep the reader in the role of passive spectator.

Although he would quarrel with certain "eastern" tendencies in The Last Temptation of Christ, Nikos Kazantzakis' novel-form life of Christ, I feel that Kierkegaard would approve of the author's attempt to describe Jesus in passages such as the following:

> The pale morning light came through the skylight and fell upon him, softly illuminating his face. All obstinacy, pride and affliction . . . The fluff about his chin and cheeks had become a curly coal-black beard. His nose was hooked, his lips thick, and since they were slightly parted, his teeth gleamed brilliantly white in the light. It was not a beautiful face, but it had a hidden disquieting charm. Were his eyelashes to blame? Thick and exceedingly long, they threw a strange blue shadow over his entire face. Or were his eyes responsible? They were large and black, full of light, full of darkness -all intimidation and sweetness, flickering like those of a snake, they stared at you behind the long lashes, and your head reeled. (Nikos Kazantzakis, The Last Temptation of Christ, tr. P.A. Bien, New York, Bantam Books, Inc., 1961, p. 14.).

The sensual imagery of a Renan is seen again in Kazantzakis' use of the black beard, white teeth, thick lips, long lashes. But what Kazantzakis does with these images constitutes the all-important difference. He employs this imagery to build up his picture of Jesus in order to draw the reader into contact with a definite historical personage. Whereas Renan's own flesh-and-blood existence) checks over the various documents relating to the life of Jesus, extracts from them certain supposedly eternal truths, arranges these into paragraphs with appropriate Greek and Latin phrases, sprinkles with footnotes, then has it all printed in books. A layman who seeks to confront Jesus is told to check out a book on dogmatics at the library. Instead of gaining some closeness and understanding of Jesus and his life, the reader enters a dense forest of technical terminology about persona, naturae, homoousion, hypostasis, and so on. Rare is the reader who catches a glimpse of Jesus in this dogmatic forest of words. Obscurantist theologians have always been easy marks for humor and sarcasm. But Kierkegaard's attack is not aimed at obscurantism as such, since a man's lack of clarity does not necessarily indicate an absence of faith. The type of theological obscurantism which drew Kierkegaard's fire is that which is so concerned either with protecting traditional formulations from encroaching heresies, or with updating the dogma to fit the newest trends, that it loses sight of the Lord of the Church and causes others to become similarly blinded. And Kierkegaard complains, too, that those immersed

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Jesus was more like a chimerical figure in a pleasant day-dream. In Kazantzakis' treatment, Jesus' face is unusual, not idealized, and his features are distinctly his own, not a composite generality. Jesus' face hints at some mystery, rather than being an open book. All these characteristics of Kazantzakis' portrait tend to draw the reader closer to the idea that here is a real man who sweats and bleeds like other men. Renan's sweet Jesus would have difficulty intimidating anyone and would send few heads reeling.

in the process of constructing systematic theologies are often subtly lured away from an awareness of their own humanity. A sympathetic contemporary lament is found in H. Richard Niebuhr's politely devastating statement that he finds himself "ill at ease with theologians who deal with the Scriptures as a nonhistorical book and undertake to explain it as though they were nonhistorical men."[8] Kierkegaard sums up his own lament as follows:

> O Lord Jesus Christ, would that we also might see Thee in Thy pure form and in the actual environment in which Thou didst walk here on earth; not in the form in which an empty and meaningless tradition . . . has deformed Thee.[9]

Aside from these two main methods of dehistoricizing Jesus -poetizing and doctrinal transformation- Kierkegaard's lively mind isolated many other methods by which his contemporaries produced fantastic pictures of Jesus. Among them is the position which over-deifies Jesus, thereby turning the human Jesus into some infinite deity whose incomprehensibility is the very occasion for his being ignored by men.[10] Also, there are those who would retain Jesus' humanity, but shape him into a Jesus of "the gentle look, the kindly eye," reducing him to a likable chap, winsome but innocuous.[11] And Kierkegaard refers often to the method of self-deception whereby a man acknowledges that Jesus' concrete life places certain obligations on his own life, yet completely ignores these obligations in actual practice, never sensing the contradiction. One humorous story which Kierkegaard tells to illustrate this point describes a flock of domesticated geese who all heartily agree that it is the proper destiny of geese to soar high in the air. Yet these same geese continue to grow fat and comfortable and merely waddle around on the ground.[12] Also, Kierkegaard refers to a kind of lyrical glamorizing whereby the realities of Jesus' life are cast into the timeless language of the poet-sage. This approach would replace "Jesus died," with "Jesus went over the Akeron."[13] This latter may be esthetically preferable says Kierkegaard, but it is worse than euphemistic, it is dangerously misleading. There are other examples of the dehistoricizing error which Kierkegaard uncovers with caustic wit elsewhere in his literature. But those mentioned above will serve to illustrate Kierkegaard's sensitivity to this issue and his intense opposition to the dehistoricizers.

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[8] H. Richard Niebuhr, The Responsible Self (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), p. 46.

[9] TC 9 (XII 1).

[10] TC 1-3 (XII 94-96), Dru 1291 (X 5 A 104).

[11] TC 135-137 (XII 127), TC 247-248 (XII 232-233).

In a short essay entitled "Of the Difference Between a Genius and an Apostle," Kierkegaard gives his opinion on the motives of the dehistoricizers. Although this particular essay deals primarily with the dehistoricizing of the life of St. Paul, the principles involved also apply to the life of

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[12] Dru 1392 (EP IX 345), cf. Dru 783 (IX A 112).

[13] Dru 235 (II A 291).

Jesus. Kierkegaard states that by poetizing and glamorizing St. Paul, the dehistoricizers manage to keep him at a distance and thereby escape his probing and obligating statements. This situation matches closely that in which tourists seek to blot out the squalor of a poor village by calling it "picturesque." Kierkegaard denounces those people who transform Paul into an interesting and attractive personage in order to forget Paul the martyr.

> . . . One not infrequently hears priests, bona fide, . . . prostituting Christianity. They talk in exalted terms of St. Paul's brilliance and profundity, of his beautiful similies and so on -that is mere aestheticism . . . This kind of thoughtless eloquence is quite as likely to celebrate St. Paul as an artist in words, or better still, . . . as a tent-maker whose masterly work surpassed that of all upholsterers before and since . . .[14]

Men of nominal faith will grasp at anything, says Kierkegaard, to insulate themselves from the accusing fingers pointed at them by such Christian heroes as Paul.

Kierkegaard points out that all these dehistoricizing approaches are guilty of the same basic error: they violate the historical actuality of the man Jesus. They treat Jesus as if he were not born of woman, did not walk on the earth, did not hang on a wooden cross. These fantasy-spinning methods avoid all contact with the flesh and blood Jesus and begin straightaway with people's unanchored emotions, reflections, imaginings about Jesus. Kierkegaard feels that this method is disastrous for Christianity. He says that

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[14] GA 139-40 (XI 95-6).

> the loss is indubitable, for thereby faith loses by being deprived of what legitimately belongs to it: its historical presupposition.[15]

This "historical presupposition" is the cornerstone in Kierkegaard's thoughts about Christ and the Imitation of Christ He could not stand idly by and see it destroyed without putting up a fight.

2. Why Kierkegaard Attacks the Dehistoricizing Method

Of course, the primary reason why Kierkegaard attacks the dehistoricizing method is because he believes that, whatever else Jesus was and is, he was in fact a concretely historical person. But it is also interesting to consider Kierkegaard's emphasis on this point in the light of his overall understanding of Christianity and the Christian life of the Imitation of Christ. Kierkegaard's characteristic understanding of Christianity clearly has a great deal at stake in the question of Christ's historicity.[16] According to

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[15] COD 10 (IV 282).

[16] The entire Kierkegaardian corpus contains a wide variety of religious perspectives from the liberal theism of the early Edifying Discourses to the Trinitarian orthodoxy of the later Christian Discourses. But it can be said that Kierkegaard's mature and final loyalty was to a kind of specifically Biblical Christ-centered faith which was characterized by a sense of sin and forgiveness, voluntary suffering through self-denial, an attitude of patience and joy -all knit together and personally appropriated in a significant relationship to Jesus Christ as Pattern, Lord and Savior. The other religious perspectives reflected in Kierkegaard's earlier works do not embody all these traits, and those they

Kierkegaard, Jesus' own life was concrete. Therefore, the life of Imitation also involves concreteness. If Jesus is poetized into fantasy or transformed into doctrine, his concreteness is lost, and, correspondingly, the life of Imitation evaporates into thin air. For what man can imitate a fantasy or a doctrine? By emphasizing the historicity of Jesus, Kierkegaard maintained the explicit earth-bound context of the life of Imitation. Let us see how this works out in practice.[17]

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do embody are presented with less intensity. It is not that the mature Kierkegaard would scorn those sincere seekers who have started out on the way with a general theism: he would encourage their development. Yet he would insist that only in the traits listed above does one discover that which is distinctively Christian.

[17] It might appear that the underlying motive for Kierkegaard's stress on the concrete humanity of Jesus is to rebut the so-called Hegelian theology. According to Hegel, Jesus is "the finest feature of the Christian religion" since he so effectively illustrates the Hegelian concrete absolute, the unity of the divine Idea and a particular man. (G.W.F. Hegel, Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, vol. 3, tr. E.B. Speirs and J.B. Sanderson. London, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., 1895, p. 75. Cf. pp. 1-151, esp. pp. 33-100.) Since Kierkegaard fought to maintain Christianity's historical presupposition in the man Jesus, he would hardly agree with Hegel's view of Jesus Christ as simply a "feature," and he would be highly offended by Hegel's use of Jesus Christ as a mere "effective illustration" for Hegelian axioms.

But despite his vulnerability elsewhere Hegel could never be rightfully accused of dehistoricizing Jesus. Hegel's concrete absolute was no less concrete than it was absolute. Kierkegaard knew this. If critics of Hegel feel that one element dominated the other, they demonstrate their misunderstanding of Hegel. Thus, when Kierkegaard stressed Jesus' humanity he did it not to settle some academic score with Hegel, but rather to do away with any and all ways of thinking which lead to a fantastic picture of Jesus.

But Kierkegaard was well aware that objective arguments alone would not eliminate fantastic views of Jesus, since he felt that these views are primarily motivated by a desire to

To begin with, the one to be Imitated must be encounterable. The sort of engagement, commitment, and loyalty which are involved in Kierkegaard's notion of Imitation are simply not evoked by anything impersonal. Few, I think, could establish a personal relationship with a voice in a cloud, a shadow in the night, a many-winged seraph, or a pillar of fire. The same holds true for the romanticized hero-Jesus, the bronzed god-Jesus, the professorial book-Jesus. Such figures may fire the imaginations, titilate the senses, or impress the intellect. But they are not usually encounterable figures. However, Kierkegaard insists that Jesus was a man. One of us. Here we are on familiar ground. And we can move from here towards a significant relationship, clearer understanding, and deeper obedience in Imitation. (A complete rejection of Imitation is of course possible. But Kierkegaard wants to insure that it is a rejection which takes place after the encounter.) Kierkegaard knew that the dehistoricizing approach insulates one from an encounter with Jesus by denying or overlooking his humanity.

Suppose, for example, that two people happened to pick up a copy of the New Testament and read Jesus' words, "Woe

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avoid the strenuous aspects of the Christian life. Thus, Kierkegaard's actual target was neither Hegel nor popular Hegelianism as such, but rather the sloth and apostasy which feed on a dehistoricized Jesus. But because frontal attacks are too obvious and ineffective under such circumstances, Kierkegaard attacked from the rear, knocking down the protecting walls in hope of besieging the heart of the problem. If Hegel was assaulted in the process, it was not because he was Hegel, but because he was in the way.

unto you that are full now, for you shall hunger."[18] If one were a dehistoricizer, he might strike a reflective pose and speculate dispassionately on the various possible interpretations of that passage, perhaps even write a scholarly essay on the subject. But what if someone with a full stomach felt himself -just for a moment- face to face with the speaker of that threatening statement. It would be a strange experience. He might carry on an inner dialogue with himself.

> Who does this fellow think he is going around upsetting people's digestion?
> Is he talking about me?
> He certainly seems serious enough about it.
> Does he mean I'll be hungry soon?
> What's going on here?
> Maybe I'd better check into this.

Kierkegaard feels that the latter reader stands a much better chance of coming to a significant understanding of Christianity. His encounter with Jesus could lead to a personal involvement with the living essentials of Christianity. Whereas, the dehistoricizing approach puts one in a detached relationship to a bookish Christianity. Kierkegaard states that

> we do not believe that He came to this earth to propose to us themes for a learned investigation. But He came to this earth to prescribe the task, to leave behind Him a foot-print so that we might learn from Him.[19]

Thus, Kierkegaard urges the would-be Christian to seek to meet the man Jesus, for this meeting can usher one into the presence of what it means to be a Christian.

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[18] Luke 6:25a

[19] CD 79 (X 80).

A second reason for Kierkegaard's defense of Christianity's historical presupposition lies in his understanding of what it means to be a Christian. Over and over Kierkegaard repeats the theme that the locus of Christianity is not found in the performance of certain ritual acts or in the formal acceptance of certain creeds. Kierkegaard begins to build his case by saying that, of course, the mere mention of Christ's name does not signify a Christian, since this is commonly done in profanity.[20] Moving the argument forward, Kierkegaard claims that "two men can recite the same confession of faith, and one may be saved, the other lost."[21] Scathing denunciation is heaped upon those who merely make a show of their orthodoxy.[22] Advancing the argument even farther, Kierkegaard makes bold to affirm that "Christianity is not a doctrine."[23] At this point, Kierkegaard states that the locus of Christianity is in the actual day-to-day living of one's life. One's every word, every act, every thought, every motive are what determine his relationship, or lack thereof, to Christianity. The formal words and acts which are required for nominal church membership do not in themselves constitute a man's being a Christian. Kierkegaard is famous for his sarcastic descriptions of his countrymen who consider themselves Christians, yet in fact have a casual relationship to Christianity.

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[20] CUP 476 (VII 466).

[21] GS 100 (VIII 372).

[22] GA 158 (XI 106).

[23] TC 108 (XII 108).

> To be a thief in one's business can well be combined with being a serious Christian who takes the communion once a year . . . To be a Christian -well, if in committing fornication one does not exaggerate, or deserting the golden mean go to extremes; for cautiously, with decorum, i.e. secretly, with taste and refinement, that still can well be combined with being a serious Christian who at least hears one sermon for every fourteen comedies and romances he reads.[24]

Kierkegaard makes it clear that the Christian style of life cannot be indiscriminately blended with any and all human desires.

Nor are Christians left to their own devices as to what style of life to lead. Kierkegaard said that Christians "are not adherents of a doctrine, but followers of a life."[25] And that life which they are to follow -or pattern themselves after- is the life of Jesus. On the basis of the New Testament record concerning the life and teachings of Jesus, Kierkegaard sets up an ideal "pattern" (Forbillede) to which the individual Christian is supposed to conform. The life of Jesus is the model which the Christian is obligated to attempt to imitate. But what if the model is represented in a vague fashion, bathed in poetic rhapsodies, hidden by esoteric mists, or distorted by scholarly dismemberment? In this case, the would-be Imitator is left with no certain direction for his earth-bound life, no sure pattern which is relevant to existence as he knows it. An ephemeral vision leaves no lasting image. A passion play actor is still an actor. A non-human Son of God does not enter fully into the life of the sons of men and women. The sharply-focused New Testament solidity regarding Jesus' human blood, sweat, and tears is whisked away into a never-never land of fuzzy images, dreamlike contexts, and alien situations. Under these circumstances, the dehistoricizing process has rendered the formal category of Imitation vacuous of any specific and applicable content.

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[24] JY 198 (XII 457).

[25] TC 231 (XII 217).

It is just this sort of vacuum which Kierkegaard strives to avoid. Since Kierkegaard locates the essence of the Christian life in the area of concrete acts, and since the pattern for the Christian life is derived from Jesus' life, it is essential that the life of Jesus be seen as a set of concrete acts and events. Kierkegaard seeks to picture Jesus in a way which avoids the pitfalls described by him in an early entry in his diary:

> The models of the religious life are often so abstract; one does not see them tried in the everyday sufferings of mankind, in sickness and physical weakness and all that goes with it.[26]

Kierkegaard consistently pictured Jesus as a real man, caught up in the many everyday problems and trials which plague mankind. As we shall see in the next section, the Jesus of Kierkegaard's New Testament-derived pages is clearly a man abroad in our world: walking its highways and village streets; dealing with its kind, exasperating, powerful, weak, sick, cruel, petty people; meeting temptations and overcoming them; making decisions; facing with confidence the horror of his last hours on earth. Kierkegaard insists that the Biblical records present us with ho shadowy figure, no abstract vision. Here is a man who lived in our world, knew our environment, moved through its jungle of trials. That he participated in all this makes him kin to us. That he triumphed over it makes him Lord over us. And Kierkegaard never lets us forget that the recorded specificity of Jesus' human life provides the category of Imitation with concrete content.

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[26] Dru 702 (VIII A 335).

3. Kierkegaard's Rehistoricizing Method

Kierkegaard asserts that the life of Jesus is "infinitely more important" than the doctrines written about him.[27] In discussing the teaching of Christianity, especially on the Imitation of Christ, Kierkegaard states that not the volumes of catechism, but rather the life of Jesus itself is the key teaching of the church.[28] Thus it is that Kierkegaard proposes to sweep away all the ecclesiastical paraphernalia which over the years has hidden and distorted the actual historical life of Jesus. In place of the dehistoricizing method, Kierkegaard proposes a counter-method of rehistoricizing the life of Jesus. Such a method hopes to isolate and restore to their rightful place the actual day-to-day events of Jesus' life, clothed in a light of reality and told in a vivid, lively, and engaging mode.

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[27] TC 122-123, cf. 34-35 (XII 114-115, cf. 29-30).

[28] PF 50 (IV 227), TC 123 (XII 35).

How is it, then, that Kierkegaard seeks to rehistoricize the life of Jesus?[29] His first step is to present in clear and simple language the basic observable events in Jesus' life as recorded in the New Testament. By presenting these in an unadorned manner, Kierkegaard hopes to dispel the aura of an unreal fantasy-tale which usually surrounds the recounting of these events. For example, Kierkegaard speaks of the conditions concerning Jesus' birth in the following economic manner:

> Jesus Christ, the lowly man, born of a despised maiden, His father a carpenter,

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[29] It needs to be said at the outset that Kierkegaard did not emphasize the humanity of Jesus in order to keep any dogmatic scale evenly balanced, or to tip it one way or another. That sort of undertaking can be seen in the various patristic and modern works which deserve the title Against Heresies. But Kierkegaard was not urging people to endorse a Monarchian or Ebionite "line." And his targets were not the "positions" of Docetism, Theophanism, Modalism, Monophysitism, Monotheletism, or what have you. Kierkegaard was not tinkering with disembodied lines and positions. He was addressing people. People do hold doctrinal positions, yet their position-life is often compartmentalized from their lived-life. A man's choice of Christologies could influence or be influenced by his everyday life of deciding and valuing. But quite often it is not. It is that inner lived-life which Kierkegaard seeks to reach. And he feels that fantastic pictures of Jesus get in the way. Kierkegaard bends his efforts to encourage an encounter between a man's lived-life and Jesus. If in the process he appears pro-Ebionite or anti-Docetic, be assured that it is not a self-conscious pose. (It should be noted that this point is a direct parallel to that made on page 13 regarding Kierkegaard's so-called anti-Hegelianism.)

His kindred people of the lowest class . . .[30]

Kierkegaard takes great pains to point out that Jesus' father earned a living working with his hands, that Jesus' grandparents were not high up on the socio-economic scale. In short, Kierkegaard tries to make the point that this baby boy named Jesus was born into a specific family setting, just as all babies are. And if these words are too easily ignored, Kierkegaard can speak more strikingly:

> He let himself be born in poverty and lowliness, and not this only, but in despicable condition, of a betrothed virgin to whom the upright man who was betrothed to her showed a kindness in not putting her away secretly . . . The illegitimate child . . . brought to birth in a stable (for in the case of a despised maiden there was no family connexion with a layette in readiness), laid in a manger. If there was any question of connexion, it must be with the horses.[31]

How many times has the story of Jesus' birth been read from the pulpit? And how many times has the congregation recognized it immediately, then let their minds slip out of gear and their eyes drift out of focus as the so-familiar words flowed past their ears. Kierkegaard tries and tries to keep his readers awake and sensitive to the concrete realities found in the Biblical record. People are lulled by such words as "manger" and "stable," but they may be jarred to alertness by references to Jesus' layette, and Mary's giving birth to an illegitimate child. This is certainly no shock method for the mere sake of shock. Kierkegaard firmly believed that people must be personally confronted with the man Jesus before they can become significantly related to Christianity. And, to Kierkegaard, the command of Imitation is so urgent and the message of Christianity is so important that he wishes everyone could become receptive to it.

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[30] TC 40 (XII 35).

[31] JY 171-2 (XII 433).

In another effort to heighten the receptivity of his readers to the reality of Jesus, Kierkegaard focuses on Jesus' human traits as recorded in the New Testament. In an early entry in his diary, Kierkegaard comments that

> one of the outbursts where Christ's humanity is most apparent is surely in his words to Judas, 'what thou doest, do quickly' . . .[32]

Any man who has faced a very trying experience with the words, "Well, hurry up, let's get it over with," can take a first step toward meeting Jesus by recognizing that Jesus shared feelings much like his. In a later book, Kierkegaard refers again to these same words to illustrate Jesus' experience of dread (*ængstes*).[33] And Jesus' cry from the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" is a further indication of the torment which gripped Jesus at times.[34] If a man has ever felt alone and lost in the vast sea of despair, he can sense that his own cry of anguish blends in part with Jesus' cry from the cross. Kierkegaard feels that a man's recognition of this common bond of anguish is an important step toward his acceptance of his own cross as well as of the deliverance which lies beyond the cross.

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[32] Dru 221 (II A 258).

[33] COD 139 (IV 421). JY 186 (XII 446).

[34] COD *loc*. *cit*.

In a similar fashion, the man who is confronted with temptation can take heart in the knowledge that Jesus was also tempted.[35] This may seem like cold comfort, since Jesus was not swayed.[36] Yet Kierkegaard stresses that even though Jesus foreknew his fate from the beginning, he chose it voluntarily without compulsion.[37] The fact that Jesus did experience genuine temptation, says Kierkegaard, gives his words about temptation a realistic ring which they would not otherwise have. It is perhaps similar to the program of Alcoholics Anonymous in which a rehabilitated alcoholic says to a newcomer, "I know from experience how hard it is not to take a drink." Someone who never drank would hardly be able to make that statement with the same sense of conviction or compassion. And unless the person making the statement was himself able to resist taking the drink, the statement would have a ring of despair. But since the speaker experiences the temptation himself yet is able to overcome it, his statement has a special ring not only of reality but also of hope.

A third aspect of Kierkegaard's rehistoricizing method takes him into the controversial area of the development of Jesus' relationship to the Father. There is some evidence that Kierkegaard stressed Jesus' humanity to the point that he attributed some form of development to Jesus' spiritual life. In _The Gospel of Suffering_, Kierkegaard states that Jesus "learned obedience from the things which he suffered."[38] From this one might conclude that on the basis of various experiences Jesus advanced in his knowledge of what it means to obey. This approach seems to be entirely in keeping with Kierkegaard's attempt to rehistoricize Jesus' life by establishing parallels between it and common human lives. For surely no ordinary man is born outright with a willingness to obey God's commands, especially under such trying circumstances. And the man who never felt any surprise or rebellion at being required to suffer physical and mental torment is certainly more fantastic than one who learned such obedience over a period of time.

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[35] COD 71 (IV 348). Cf. Matt. 4:1-11 and parallels.

[36] Dru 814 (IX A 249). Cf. Dru 1020 (X 2 A 296).

[37] TC 106, 121, 167 (XII 99, 113, 156). SE 80-1 (XII 344-5).

Kierkegaard suggests this developmental theme also in _Training in Christianity_ where he describes Jesus as having developed the pattern (_har udviklet Forbilledet_) so that now as perfected (_nu som Fuldendt_) he can lead others.[39] This appears to leave open the possibility that at some point in time Jesus did not represent the full pattern in its perfected state. If this merely means that the full pattern involves the crucifixion and resurrection, then of course it could not be fulfilled earlier than at the time of Jesus' death. But Kierkegaard speaks of Jesus' "schooling,"[40] of his "testing,"[41] and "probation."[42] These terms and their usage seem to lend support to the developmental thesis. Such evidence could start one thinking that perhaps Kierkegaard did in fact believe that Jesus developed a sense of obedience which he lacked at first, and that his life on earth was a trial, the outcome of which was not certain to him as he lived it out. This developmental theme fits quite naturally into Kierkegaard's rehistoricizing context.

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[38] GS 47-51 (VIII 336-338). Cf. Hebrews 5:8.
This developmental theme was suggested to me by Gregor Malantschuk, noted Ukranian-Danish Kierkegaard scholar, during conversations with him in Copenhagen, Denmark in 1963.

[39] TC 182 (XII 171).

It is Kierkegaard's hope that by retelling in vivid and simple language the events of Jesus' life, and by dramatically pointing out Jesus' involvement in human temptation and rebellion against God, he might dispose of the fantastic views of Jesus and establish the rehistoricized Jesus in their place. I have argued that thereby Kierkegaard sought to insure the concrete relevance of the command of Imitation.

Unfortunately for those who want a simple answer, Kierkegaard does not let the matter rest. Having stressed the recognizable humanity of Jesus, he makes the dialectical move to stress the hidden divine side of Jesus. One can read in Kierkegaard that Jesus was not anxious, but rather was "care-free as a bird," with no thoughts for the morrow.[43]

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[40] GS 47-51 (VIII 336-338).

[41] TC 182 (XII 171).

[42] TC 183 (XII 172).

[43] PF 45 (IV 222).

And this lack of anxiety was in the face of his complete foreknowledge of his impending crucifixion.[44] And how can Jesus be truly tempted if "from eternity his will was in harmony with the Father's"?[45] Indeed, Kierkegaard himself has said that "there is a moving absurdity about all human categories when they are applied to Christ."[46]

On this point, as on many others, Kierkegaard's dialectic is exasperating. If he would only mediate the two poles and give us something understandable. Kierkegaard himself asks this question on our behalf:

> How did (Jesus) manage to live without anxiety . . .? He who was not unacquainted with the suffering attendant upon this anxiety . . . He who in an access of pain uttered the sigh, that His hour was not yet to come.[47]

Kierkegaard seems to state clearly both sides of the question, using human categories such as anxiety, fear, and temptation to describe Jesus' life; yet all the while accepting Jesus' unique relationship of unity with God. He makes little attempt to join these two apparently opposite poles by use of any verbal tricks.[48] We are left with a puzzle. Perhaps Kierkegaard felt that this puzzle was the price one had to pay for not sacrificing one pole or the other.

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[44] CD 78 (X 79).

[45] GS 51 (VIII 338).

[46] Dru 907 (X 1 A 309).

[47] CD 79 (X 80).

[48] Kierkegaard does try to solve the riddle of how Jesus could learn obedience while still possessing a will in complete harmony with the Father's. (GS 63-64. VIII 346-347) He labels Jesus' learned obedience as "human" and his unchanged will as "eternal," apparently assuming that this

Should Kierkegaard have attempted to solve the puzzle by proposing some ingenious way to knit the two ideas together? Various attempts have been made through the years. But in the context of the preceding discussion, we can understand Kierkegaard's unwillingness to spend time on such a project. We can almost hear him asking the puzzle-solvers whether their labors brought them or others any closer to an encounter with Jesus, or helped them along the way of following Jesus. Such an outcome is not entirely possible, Kierkegaard would be the first to admit. With God, all things are possible. And Kierkegaard freely admits that there have been times when the puzzle-solvers "knew what it was all about" and worked with words in the true service of God.[49] But, alas, this time is past. And in the main the puzzle-solving enterprise appears to be a dehistoricizing dodge.

Conclusion

It has been the purpose of this section to present various aspects of the dehistoricizing method and to show

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solves the riddle. It does not. The dramatic phrasing (and confused meaning) in the closing lines of this section by Kierkegaard strike me as his vain attempt to attract attention away from a rather inept try at mediation. Kierkegaard knew better.

[49] TC 122 (XII 115).

what kind of fantastic pictures of Jesus it can produce. Also, Kierkegaard's own rehistoricizing counter-method was isolated and analyzed. Throughout the discussion, an attempt was made to discover what Kierkegaard meant by "the infinite reality" of Jesus[50] whom he pictured as "this individual who looked like other men, spoke like them, followed their habits and customs."[51] We have concluded that Kierkegaard urges us to turn away from the unreal Jesus of fantasy, and to turn towards the real Jesus whose human life was lived out in the common arena of concrete events.

The above material was presented in the form of an argument. I contend that Kierkegaard took this particular stance, not only because he thought it was true to the New Testament record, but also because it was crucial to his understanding of the Christian life of Imitation. If the dehistoricizers are allowed to carry the day, several undesirable things happen:

1) Jesus is robbed of his humanity
2) Jesus is rendered unencounterable
3) The category of Imitation is evacuated of its specific content.

Since Kierkegaard lays great stress of the concrete life of Imitation and on the encounter with Jesus as the entrance to this life, it is essential for him to maintain Jesus' historicity.

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[50] Dru 759 (VIII A 670).

[51] Dru 417 (IV A 47).

B. JESUS SPEAKS CONCRETELY

1. The Numbness of Scholarly Detachment

Having argued his case for rehistoricizing the events of Jesus' life, Kierkegaard sets out to concretize the content and intent of Jesus' words as recorded in the New Testament. In this context, as with his treatment of the events of Jesus' life, Kierkegaard has his opponents clearly in mind. One of these is the purist who insists that proper interpretation of the Bible can be carried on only by those who are technically trained for this task. Unless the would-be interpreter is competent in various Near Eastern languages, familiar with the history of the Biblical periods, knowledgeable in the latest trends in New Testament hermeneutics, he is strongly advised to leave the interpretive task to the experts. Unfortunately, the purist laments, you cannot keep uneducated people away from the Bible, but you can at least discourage them from taking their own interpretations too seriously. For, after all, the content of the Bible is so complex that only certain highly skilled personnel can read it properly.

Kierkegaard reacts strongly against this approach and presents in place of it what might be called his "love-letter hermaneutic."[1] Kierkegaard asserts that the contents of the

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[1] SE 51-58 (XII 316-322).

Bible and especially the recorded words of Jesus are such that they can and should be read as one would read a letter from his beloved. A love letter brings joy to the heart of the receiver the minute the postman hands it to him. Its contents produce a personal pleasure while being devoured by the reader, and are re-read many times over and cherished for years to come. The lover wants to read the letter in private so that he can linger over the sweetest passages. And, important for the theme of Imitation, he is eager to enact immediately whatever wishes his beloved requests in the letter. The Bible should evoke the same sort of response in its reader, claims Kierkegaard.

Over against the lover's passionate involvement and willing obedience, Kierkegaard contrasts the sterile objectivity of the research scholar who pours over the texts with fastidious detachment. It should be made clear that Kierkegaard is not proposing that the scholar's work be abandoned as worthless or distracting in itself.[2] Kierkegaard is equally clear that, even if the Biblical text is prepared and illumined by the plodding toil of research, there should come a time when the reader puts aside the once-removing

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[2] Even though Kierkegaard appears to appreciate Biblical scholarship, one wonders if he does not in fact doubt whether the sum total of all the efforts in this field has produced a net gain for Christianity. He hints that a layman can approach the Bible without the technical apparatus and come away with as much or more of the essential message than is available to the encumbered scholar. Apparently without tongue in cheek, Kierkegaard exclaims that "if you are not learned, do not envy the scholar. Rejoice that you can begin reading God's Word at once!" (SE 54, XII 318; Cf. SE 58, XII 321-322). Yet, Kierkegaard's emphasis on such things as the love-letter hermaneutic must not be interpreted as an invitation to moon-struck Bible reading. If the Bible is a love-letter, Kierkegaard never forgets that it

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comes from God, not from some adolescent schoolgirl. Although Kierkegaard is overwhelmed by the Bible's source, and although he often rhapsodizes upon its themes, he is far from advocating that Bible readers assume an unqualified attitude of awed, uncritical acceptance. Kierkegaard has demonstrated that he can be a sharp-eyed and discriminating reader of Scripture.

A careful study of the marginal notes and markings in two of Kierkegaard's Danish New Testaments reveals his keen and discerning mind at work reading Scripture. (The two New Testaments I refer to are in the Kierkegaard Archives of the Royal Library in Copenhagen, Denmark. They are listed as entry numbers 21-32 and 33 in Niels Thulstrup's catalogue of Kierkegaard's library, Søren Kierkegaard's Bibliotek, Copenhagen, Munksgaard, 1957, page 29, which describes them as translations from the original texts and published in Copenhagen in 1820. Excerpts of pertinent portions of these New Testaments are found in Kierkegaard's Papirer, VIII 2 C 1-131, and X 6 C pp. 439-456. The editors of Kierkegaard's Papirer conclude that Kierkegaard made the notes and markings in the one New Testament--VIII 2 C 1-131--during the years 1847-48, and in the other--X 6 C pp. 439-456--between the years 1849-52.) Among the many interesting examples to choose from, I should cite Kierkegaard's observance of the apparent inconsistency between John 12:47 which denies Jesus' role as Judge, and Mark 16:16 which underscores Jesus' judgment (VIII 2 C 62). Also, Kierkegaard does not overlook that the book of Acts in one passage denies that Christianity is a sect (Acts 24:14) and yet elsewhere (Acts 28:22) allows the "sect" to apply to Christianity (VIII 2 C 82). And there is evidence which could suggest that Kierkegaard was displeased with the possessive overtones in Paul's speaking of "my Gospel" (VIII 2 C 84, 88) and "my Spirit" (VIII 2 C 92). At any rate, Kierkegaard underlined the word "my" in these three similar passages and most probably had some connected point in mind when doing so. Furthermore, Kierkegaard notices that the Gospels both affirm (Matt. 11:14) and deny (John 1:21) that John the Baptist was Elijah (X 6 C 28). And while Kierkegaard was reading in Matthew chapter twenty-three that Jesus called some Jews "fools," he slyly pencilled a note in the margin referring to an earlier chapter in Matthew scholarly apparatus in order to allow the words to speak for themselves. Kierkegaard's point is that the apparatus often deadens the personal impact of Scripture, transforming intimate messages into grammatical puzzles and concrete commands into research projects. Everyone -and perhaps the scholar most of all- needs to sit alone with his Bible and confront the text as if it were addressed to him personally. Kierkegaard says that

> when you read God's Word learnedly -we do not disparage learning, no, far from it- but be sure to remember that when you read God's Word learnedly, with a dictionary, etc., you are not reading God's Word . . . If you are a scholar, take care in all this learned reading . . . that you do not ultimately forget to read God's Word.[3]

The content of the Bible is such that the manner in which it is read must match the nature of the content in order for its message to come alive for the reader. A reader

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(Matt. 23:17) where Jesus is recorded as saying that whoever calls another a "fool" is thereby made "liable to the hell of fire" (X 6 C 67).

I do not claim that these markings and marginalia shed any new and startling light on Kierkegaard's thought. In the main, this material reflects the themes which dominated Kierkegaard's thought and writing of that period. However, this material does allow the student of Kierkegaard to see him at work in his study and to observe how he fed upon Scripture. And his marginal comments on particular passages are quick and pointed, often oblique, always penetrating. This material, of which I have cited only one type and a small fraction of the whole, reinforces my already high opinion of Kierkegaard's extraordinary skill, profundity, and artistry as an exegete.

But I did not come to praise Kierkegaard, I merely wanted to show that for all his emphasis on simplicity and subjectivity in Scripture reading, he intended no naiveté or promiscuity in these matters.

[3] SE 53 (XII 318).

does not genuinely confront a piece of literature unless he adopts a mind-set appropriate to the nature of the material. The land-locked sailor who longs for the sea expectantly picks up his copy of Maesfield and soon feels himself liberated from the prairies and set down once again on the rolling deck with reeling gulls and salty spray. The satisfied shopkeeper cannot be expected to participate in such rapture. In a similar fashion, the message of Jesus is intended to meet intensely personal and subjective needs, hopes, and fears of individual men. Furthermore, it is intended to lay upon men the obligation to pattern themselves after Jesus' life and teachings. Thus, if a Bible reader assumes the role of the dispassionate researcher -with all the neutralization of subjectivity which this supposedly entails-he thereby avoids contact with the living intent of the Biblical message.

Kierkegaard further endeavors to concretize Jesus' words by stressing that they are addressed to each individual person who reads or hears them. It is not valid to claim that Jesus' words are dated and therefore limited in application. Kierkegaard urges that

> we must get rid of all the bosh about this being said only to the Apostles, and this only to the disciples, and this only to the first Christians, etc.[4]

Kierkegaard takes great pains to hammer home the point that the words of the Bible are addressed to all men of all ages, and were meant to be taken seriously and personally by any man who happened upon them.[5] This long section is devoted to making this point strongly. Kierkegaard illustrates this point by re-telling the Old Testament story of how King David plotted to have one of his generals' killed so that he could add the general's wife to his own harem.[6] The reference is to the Old Testament book of Second Samuel, chapters 11 and 12. Soon after the plot to kill the general had been successfully executed, the prophet Nathan came before the King, presumably to get his opinion on a troublesome local situation. In actual fact, the situation Nathan described to the King was a disguised version of the King's own lust and murder. The King, not suspecting the parallel, became irate at "the man's" crime. Through it all, he failed to see the connection with his own crime, until Nathan said to him, "You are the man." In the resulting shock of self-recognition, King David saw that the prophet's words had been directed at him alone. Kierkegaard reminds each Bible reader that he is "the man" for whom the Bible message -including the message regarding Imitation- is intended.[7]

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[4] JY 207 (XII 466).

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[5] SE 33-74 (XII 299-337).

[6] SE 62-64 (XII 325-327).

[7] In his book, Christ and Apollo, William F. Lynch, S.J., makes reference to a parallel case which illustrates this point very well, Father Lynch is speaking of the power of the written or spoken word in literature to fire a man's mind, given the proper conditions and level of awareness on the part of the reader or hearer. The illustration, which Father Lynch acknowledges as borrowed from Francis Fergusson's book, The Idea of a Theatre (Princeton: Princeton University

2. The Paralysis of Over-Interpreting

Kierkegaard bemoans the fact that Biblical scholarship so often cushions the reader from the impact of Jesus' commands. Jesus said, "Do not kill."[8] The content of that statement seems clear enough. And the imperative form conveys its intent: obedience to the command. If allowed to do so, this straight-forward statement can make a direct and readily understood impact on whoever reads it. But the clarity of this command, "Do not kill," is quickly clouded when the Biblical experts get their hands on it. One expert may insist that we need not take this passage too seriously since it was most probably inserted at a later date by Judaizing elements within the early church. Another may argue that this passage must be tempered by other passages in which Jesus seems to condone less peaceful tactics. A third might insist that Jesus intended that this command be binding only upon the one person (the "ruler") to whom he addressed it, and not upon all men in all eras, especially those like ours.

Press, 1949), is that of Shakespeare's Hamlet where the play within a play makes such an impact on the doers of the bloody deed.

> By itself it (the play within a play) is the most fragile, surface, melodramatic kind of plot, but bring it in touch with each conscience on the stage and it seems to have the infinite capacity to light up the special detail of each crime's conscience in a special way (William F. Lynch, op.cit., p. 157.).

Although at this point Father Lynch is not discussing theological literature, nonetheless the general question of how a piece of writing stimulates one to self-awareness and even self-discovery seems to me to be much the same in Hamlet as in the Bible.

[8] Luke 18:20.

Those who wish to avoid Jesus' commands are pleased by such exegesis and eagerly put it to use. Listen: "Anyone with common sense knows what would happen if we relaxed our defenses today. We would be overrun. Jesus certainly did not intend that. You certainly don't, do you? That sounds subversive! That is a rather knotty text, as the diversity of scholarly opinion on it indicates. We had better leave it to the experts who have been working on it for quite a while and will no doubt publish something authoritative on it soon enough. But in the meantime, let us not act hastily . . ."

Confronted by a bewildering array of interpretations, the layman is first puzzled, then distracted, then immobilized. The ardor of his will is chilled by the coolant of scholarship. Kierkegaard reconstructs the barrage of questions which foster indecision and, finally, lack of obedience.

> Oh tedious verbosity! 'But how much belongs in a stricter sense to God's Word? Which books are genuine? Moreover, are they by the Apostles, and are the Apostles trustworthy? Have they themselves seen all, or have they perhaps only heard various things from others? And then the interpretations -30,000 different interpretations! And then this crowd or mob of scholars and opinions- . . .'[9]

The sharpness of the concrete demands made in the text is never felt due to the surrounding cushion of varying interpretations.

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[9] SE(H) 24 (XII 315).

A similar note is sounded when Kierkegaard speaks elsewhere of a man's being "deceived by overmuch knowledge" which produces a "remoteness from all decision." (T 17-18; V 187-188)

As one example of this, Kierkegaard discusses Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan who aided the injured traveller after two others had ignored his plight. This parable can be approached from various points of view. It can be seen as illustrative of first century travel conditions. It could be analyzed as a well-constructed literary piece. Since this parable is not found elsewhere in the New Testament, it might be seen to hold a partial key to the Lukan mind-set. Its unusual verb forms are interesting to the linguist. And so on and so on. But no matter how much these various matters interest the reader, he is not exempt from the command expressed in the story, "Go and do likewise." Kierkegaard describes the proper response to this parable:

> Then when the parable ends and Christ says to the Pharisee, 'Go and do thou likewise," you shall say to yourself, 'He is speaking to me -away at once!'[10]

But, alas, it all too often comes to pass that a Bible text provides the occasion, not for obedience, but for a multiplicity of learned opinion. Little does it seem to matter that the passage undergoing technical scrutiny is a command, clearly phrased in the imperative mood.

Kierkegaard is well aware that not all the passages in the Bible are as clearly stated as the command against killing. I am quite sure that Kierkegaard would heartily endorse study of background material and secondary sources in the case of the majority of Bible passages.[11] What he is complaining about is the scholarly fog which can obscure even the most clearly recorded commands, thereby discouraging obedience to them. Kierkegaard admits the possibility that a superabundance of conflicting interpretations of a passage can of itself deter people from obeying its intended command. But he makes the even more damning accusation that more often than not people are all too well aware of what Christianity commands. They just do not want to obey. Thus they seize upon the differences of scholarly opinion as a kind of sophisticated rationalization for ignoring the commands. The cry goes up:

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[10] SE(H) 47 (XII 329).

> 'Every minister I hear tells me something different.'
> 'But I heard that now the Dead Sea Scrolls changed all that.'
> 'Even the scholars disagree. How can you expect me to . . .'

Kierkegaard's awareness of the intricacies of Biblical exegesis does not dull his insight into the cunning nature of men who invent obstacles to place in the road to action. Accordingly, Kierkegaard does not take too seriously what he considers to be intentional subterfuge. He feels that if one lifts this rock of exegetical rationalization, he will discover the slugs of sloth crawling beneath it. Consequently, Kierkegaard responds to such straight-faced deceivers by calling their bluff.

> 'But,' you perhaps say, 'there are so many obscure passages in the Bible, whole books that are almost

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[11] SE(H) 28 (XII 318); CUP 27 (VII 15).

> like riddles.'
>
> To this I would answer: 'If I am to have anything to do with this objection, it must come from one whose life has expressed that he has scrupulously observed all the passages which are easy to understand. Is this the case with you?'[12]

And Kierkegaard drives home his point in the following biting statement:

> It is only all too easy to understand the demand which is contained in God's Word ('Give all your goods to the poor,' 'If any man strikes you on the right cheek, turn the left one to him as well,' 'If any one deprives you of your coat, let him take your cloak also,' 'Always rejoice,' 'Consider it nothing but joy when you fall into various temptations,' etc.) It is all just as easy to understand as the remark, 'The weather is fine today' -a remark which could become difficult to understand on one condition only- if a litterateur got to interpret it. Not even the shallowest silly wretch can with any truth deny being able to understand the demand, but *it is a hard pinch for flesh and blood to will to understand it and to be obliged to act accordingly*.[13] (My italics.)

Kierkegaard was well aware of the complex nature of the Biblical record, and was not in favor of each man absolutizing his first impression of the meaning of the New Testament text. Yet he knew the cunning in the hearts of men. So, he tended to weight his emphasis to overcome the natural reluctance of comfortable men to upset their status quo. His point is that the hesitation to act is not in most cases due to a confusion regarding Biblical interpretation. Rather, more often it is due to the hesitancy of the human will which understands only too well what is demanded of it, yet shrinks from obeying the demand.

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[12] SE(H) 29 (XII 318).

[13] SE(H) 37 (XII 323).

3. The Mutilation of System-Building

In addition to purists, spectator-readers, and over-interpreters, Kierkegaard attacked those theological system-builders who seize the contents of Jesus' words and actions in order to compile, compare, and contrast them, and finally bundle them all up in an orderly fashion into a theological system. Such a system is constructed by using the life of Jesus as a basis, and extrapolating out from this to get answers to a whole series of more or less theological problems -from anthropomorphism to zoological-evolution. If the source material does not quite stretch to cover a particular issue, it can be extended at will via an implicational scheme. The underlying assumption in this approach is that the New Testament record of the life of Jesus is of such a nature that properly trained personnel can extract from it answers to many kinds of questions. And the overall goal of this method is to achieve a complete and orderly treatment of the main theological issues of the day.

Kierkegaard uses the image of the obscure sage and his loyal devotees to caricature these theological constructionists. In effect, says Kierkegaard, the system-builders treat Jesus as if he were an eccentric sage whose extemporaneous speeches and off-the-cuff conversations appear quite fragmentary. But in the hands of the sage's loyal and gifted devotees, this raw material can be molded into a gleaming theological construction -finely drawn, and organically linked. Of course, the gifted pupils say, this is not material for the masses. Unfortunately, only those of the sage's inner circle can fully comprehend it. It might have looked as if the sage were speaking to common people in everyday language, but in reality it was pretty heady stuff, quite intricate and subtle, dealing with rarified concepts, rather beyond the reach of those to whom he spoke. It is a pity, of course, but there you are.

Kierkegaard begins his vigorous attack against this formal, implicational schematization by claiming that it misrepresents the content of Jesus' words. To Kierkegaard, Jesus' words are "detached aphoristic utterances, some bits of sententious wisdom, constantly repeated with variations . . ."[14] This quote is taken from an ironical context, yet this context reflects Kierkegaard's own viewpoint. The attempt to formalize Jesus' living, informal, and personal words can only mutilate them. There is a subtle, glowing, elusive quality about the New Testament story of Jesus which is lost forever in the polished precision of ordinary systematic theology. Kierkegaard further comments that "our Lord Jesus Christ did not come to the world to bring a doctrine, He never lectured."[15] Kierkegaard constantly criticized the theological "lecturers" of his day whose speculation and intellectualizing of Christianity he felt misrepresented the content of Jesus' words and betrayed the side of Christianity which is unequivocally anchored in the real-life world of day-to-day history.

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[14] TC 51 (XII 46).

[15] JY 200 (XII 459).

> By force of lecturing they have transformed the God-Man into a speculative unity of God and man sub specie aeterni, manifested that is to say, in the nullipresent medium of pure being, whereas in truth the God-Man is the unity of God and individual man in an actual historical situation.[16]

Jesus and his words are irreparably damaged by the process in which the system-builders wrench them from their living context. In short, his words are dehistoricized in the same manner, as was discussed above, in which Jesus' life is often dehistoricized. The concrete content of Jesus' words is irreversibly altered when it is blended with technical terminology and fine distinctions, hammered into propositional form, and forced into neat paragraphs.

And not only does the system builder misrepresent the content of Jesus' words, he also distorts the intent of the words. Take, for example, Jesus' words of comfort to those who mourn. Suppose that these words are taken over by the expert and used as the basis for a detailed treatment of the correlation between the doctrine of God's omnipotence and the occurrence of humanly undesirable events. Is this being true to the original intent of these words? One assumes that these words were spoken with sympathetic compassion to give comfort to those who were heavy with grief over some tragic personal loss.[17] Such a mourner is not likely to find much comfort in a treatise on the problem of evil. Perhaps Jesus' words will not comfort him either, but at least he can see that they are intended to comfort him. One is often not sure just what the treatise writer intends by his words. The New Testament records some of Jesus' words of solace.

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[16] TC 123 (XII 115).

[17] The following prayer from an Order of Service for Burial reflects Kierkegaard's point concerning Jesus' sympathy

> I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he die, yet shall he live.[18]
>
> Let not your heart be troubled: believe in God, believe also in me.[19]
>
> Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.[20]
>
> Lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.[21]

Surely words such as these were not meant to stay buried between the covers of some Biblical concordance, catalogued under "I," "Let," "Blessed," and "Lo." Nor are they intended as source material for some esoteric Tröst-theologie. These words, says Kierkegaard, were intended to be heard by those of us who have need of them. They are words to be marvelled at and cherished and kept close to the heart.

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with the woes of the world.

> O Lord and Master, who thyself didst weep beside the grave, and art touched with the feeling of our sorrows, fulfill now thy promise that thou wilt not leave thy people comfortless, but will come to them (Methodist Book of Worship. Nashville, The Methodist Publishing House, 1945, p. 420.).

[18] John 11:25.

[19] John 14:1.

[20] Matt. 5:4.

[21] Matt. 28:20.

Perhaps no aspect of the Christian tradition has been more widely discussed and written about than the way in which Jesus Christ "saved" the human race. Without going into the theological niceties involved here, the point can be made that, for Kierkegaard, a proper treatment of this theme of Salvation would emphasize that Jesus did not die for some vague entity called Mankind, but that he died for each and every individual man. Kierkegaard states that

> the sacrifice He made was not made in a general sort of way, nor would He save a man in a general sort of way - . . . No, He sacrificed Himself to save each severally.[22]

The work of Biblical exegesis when commenting on the content of passages dealing with Jesus' role as Savior should be to make vivid to each lost man that he has a Savior. Any clouding of this central intent of these passages, says Kierkegaard, does the Gospel a disservice. Did Jesus come to earth in order to act out a passive role in some cosmic drama, giving a performance on a stage far removed from the needs and fears of individual men? Absolutely not, says Kierkegaard who insists that Jesus concerned himself with the human needs of men.

> It must never be forgotten that Christ also succoured temporal and worldly needs . . .Consequently Christ also succoured earthly suffering, healed the sick, the lepers, the possessed, fed people, changed water into wine, calmed the sea - etc.[23]

Kierkegaard's point is that Jesus had direct dealings with men and their physical world. His relationship to his times and contemporaries was solid and tangible. No system-builder has the right to uproot the life of Jesus from its place on earth, and transform him into a celestial being who dispensed abstract homilies fit only for reworking into formal dogmatics. Kierkegaard notes that to the ordinary woman of Bethany who anointed his head with oil, Jesus gave praise and commanded that she and her homely deed be memorialized along with his own glorious Gospel.[24] Jesus and his words are inseparably linked together with men and their earth and must not be pried loose from this personal, concrete, living context.

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[22] CD 278 (X 278).

[23] Dru 978 (X 2 A 86).

It is true that the natural science student learns much about butterflies by capturing various specimens, chloroforming them, and then neatly arranging them on a classification display. But somehow the indescribable pleasure they brought is diminished when each bears a descriptive Latin label. And the grassy fields are the poorer for this display. The gay colors which reflected the sun are now dusty, under glass. While the once freely fluttering wings are impaled on the collector's pins.

Conclusion

Throughout this section we have observed Kierkegaard repulsing attacks by those who seek to undercut the concreteness and vitality of Jesus' speech. The Biblical purist is warned that his scholarly apparatus can hinder the encounter with Jesus and the receptivity to the Scriptural message. Kierkegaard exposed the sloth and deceit which use the multiplicity of exegetical opinions to avoid Jesus' commands. We have seen how the command to Imitation can be forgotten in the world of fine distinctions. We are reminded that each of us is "the man" for whom the Bible's message of obligation and promise is intended. And Kierkegaard chastises the system builders for misrepresenting the content and intent of Jesus' words.

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[24] Dru 759 (VIII A 670).

In this discussion we have witnessed how carefully and thoroughly Kierkegaard clears the theological scene of these distractions -these "litterateurs"- so that an undistorted picture of Jesus and his words can emerge: a Jesus who provides the answer to timeless human needs, rather than material for research; a Jesus who intended his commands to be obeyed, not qualified to death; a Jesus who spoke spontaneously to personal situations, and did not dictate a system of theology. This is the picture of Jesus which Kierkegaard saw, and the one he works so hard to enable his readers to see.

The relevance of this stance of Kierkegaard's for his emphasis on Imitation has been indicated. The command to follow Jesus seems out of place in libraries, too unsophisticated for the research scholar, and a bit of an embarrassment to the enchaired dogmatician. Be that as it may, Kierkegaard insists that we are all at home in the world from which and to which Jesus speaks. His words come from the familiar context of food, weather, friends, families, houses, travel. We have met people much like those he met -hospitable, blind, afraid, greedy, loyal, vacillating, betrayers. The New Testament records much about Jesus' interaction with this world of ours. The path which would-be Christians are to follow is clearly marked out in many passages -unless, as Kierkegaard says, some "litterateur" interprets it.

This chapter has been devoted to an exploration and analysis of the method, content, and motives involved in Kierkegaard's vigorous defense of the concrete life and speech of Jesus. The material has been presented in the form of an argument in support of my assertion that Kierkegaard mounted this defense in order to preserve and vivify the Christian command of the Imitation of Christ.

SECOND PART

JESUS THE OFFENSIVE AND ATTRACTIVE PERSON

INTRODUCTION

This Part and the one preceding it are intended to acquaint the reader with Kierkegaard's portrayal of Jesus Christ, the One Imitated. The last Part dealt with Kierkegaard's emphasis on the concrete life and speech of Jesus. This present Part takes up Kierkegaard's ideas on two of Jesus' central characteristics: offensiveness and attractiveness. Many different threads are woven together by Kierkegaard to develop these two characteristics. A portion of this Part is devoted to isolating, analyzing, and relating these various threads as they are found throughout Kierkegaard's writings. Also, as in the previous pages, such material is explicitly placed in the larger context of the Imitation of Christ, and is designed to illuminate Kierkegaard's understanding of this theme.

A. JESUS THE OFFENSIVE PERSON

Introduction

The first section of this Part deals with Jesus' offensiveness -that stamp of offensiveness which Christianity supposedly bears to this day. For purposes of this discussion, this massive topic is narrowed to the area of Christianity's offense to reason.[1] And within this still large area, three particular kinds of offended reason are singled out for detailed investigation. These three are: scientific reason,

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[1] Some other kinds of offense which Kierkegaard also dealt with are mentioned below. These are elements in Jesus' life and teachings which caused his contemporaries and followers to be offended by him.

(1) The offense of ineptitude was caused by Jesus' impotence in the face of temporal power. The zealous Palm Sunday crowds felt cheated by this papier-mâché Messiah who showed no interest in their militant cause of Jewish nationalism. And Jesus' own disciples were offended by his subjection to temporal power, because they had believed him to be Lord over all things (TC 106-107, 120-122; XII 99-100, 112-114).

(2) The offense of radical freedom is caused by Jesus' teaching of an indeterminate ethics of compassion which conflicts with a clear-cut legalistic system. Jesus charged that the codified minutiae which characterized first century Pharisaic Law encouraged religious superficiality, self-righteousness and self-justification. He proposed instead a law of love which stresses the motive behind the deed, and moves freely, unhampered by casuistry. It is not difficult to imagine the anger which the indignant upholders of the Established Code Ethic felt toward this radical seditionist teacher of a chaotic higher righteousness (TC 87-89; XII 82-87).

(3) The offense of blasphemy is caused by the claims of divinity made by the carpenter's son from Nazareth. Jesus made some extravagant claims regarding his divine authority, his power to forgive sins, and his identity with the Father. Is not the response of scandalized affront appropriate to someone who looks like a man but talks like God? (TC 43-56, 105-107; XII 38-50, 98-100).

These categories of offense are very central to Kierkegaard's understanding of Jesus, and his understanding of Jesus is central to his thought about Christianity. Consequently, I have covered these three kinds of offense in outline fashion, not because they are unimportant, but because they have been well covered before (Martin J. Heinecken, The Moment Before God, pp. 278-290; and Gregor Malantschuk, Kierkegaard's Way to the Truth, pp. 71-73.). It is my opinion that these three types of offense, plus the offense to reason, constitute the main categories within which Kierkegaard interpreted Christianity's offensiveness.

However, the reader should be warned that the imaginative scholar can extract many different kinds of offense from Kierkegaard's writings. But not all of them are valid. For example, one author suggests that a type of offense occurs logical reason, and comfortable reason. (These terms will be defined as they are investigated.) As the discussion unfolds, each kind of offended reason is analyzed in turn to discover the cause of the offense. We find that if scientific reason is offended, it is because Christianity claims doubt-free objective certainty for historical statements associated with Jesus' life. This sort of Christianity asserts the unquestionable occurrence of certain Biblical events, and insists on unreserved affirmation of these events as a necessary sign of membership in good standing. Next, if logical reason is offended, it is because Christianity demands unqualified assent to doctrinal propositions which conflict with certain canons of logical word usage. Within the framework of this kind of orthodoxy, proper verbal response to catechetical questions are considered the indispensable requisite of a saving God-relationship. And third, if comfortable reason is offended, it is because Christianity's life

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when a man who thinks he already knows all the truth is told that he is ignorant of the new revelation in Jesus Christ (Eduard Geismar, Lectures on the Religious Thought of Søren Kierkegaard, p. 56). A knowledgeable pagan could conceivably be offended by this situation. But I do not feel that a man's wounded intellectual pretensions constitute grounds for the type of offense appropriate to the passion-centered Christianity advocated by Kierkegaard. There are many other examples of how forgetfulness or misreading of Kierkegaard's own definitions of the terms involved can lead to an indiscriminate multiplication of erroneous material.

One of the main objects of the following discussion will be to expose such forgetfulness and to refute such misreading, in order to establish the proper context for understanding Kierkegaard's ideas regarding Christianity and its offensiveness.

values conflict with those of comfortable reason. These two opposing forces clash because each seeks to install itself as the dominant orientation of a man's subjectivity.

Having established these points, the discussion moves on. Through further analysis, it is concluded that the kind of Christianity which offends scientific reason and logical reason is not the kind of Christianity espoused by Kierkegaard. Christianity, as Kierkegaard understands it, is not at all offensive to scientific reason and logical reason, but it is completely and decisively offensive to comfortable reason. Thus, the battleground of Christianity's encounter with the world is removed from the historical-evidential context and from the logical canon context, and is placed squarely in the context of man's concrete life as it is lived out day by day. And, as we have seen, this is precisely the context of Imitation.

On the face of things, this may not appear as too dramatic a point. But the winning of this point is pivotal to my interpretation of Kierkegaard's views on the place of the Imitation of Christ within Christianity. Why is this? If the prime locus of Christianity is centered in the area of historical events or in the realm of right doctrine, then the concerns of Christianity are distinctively colored by these loci. For example, under these circumstances, it would be legitimate to lavish great amounts of high priority time and energy in an effort to shore up the affirmed historicity of the events. Also, it would be considered a highly significant Christian enterprise to pay fastidious attention to the exact transmission of the authorized narratives from generation to generation. Or, if the prime emphasis were on doctrine, then the bulk of ecclesiastical concern would be focused on building a protective hedge about the sacred phraseology. The saving essentials of Christianity would be constituted by a sum of doctrinal statements. Thus, it would make the greatest possible sense to employ full-time the ablest talents in Christendom for the task of guarding the true faith by determining who is "in" and who is "out." And no one would doubt, on Christian grounds, the appropriateness of pouring righteous wrath upon heretics.

It is plain that within such a framework of thought and practice, the energies of the Church would be directed further and further away from the concern of the life of Imitation. They have other things to do: archeology with a vengeance, suppression of heresy. Other topics are given precedent in Church life and soon dominate the scene. The personal practice of Imitation is not encouraged in such an environment. Energy which might have been expended in the cause of Imitation is siphoned off -in the name of Christianity- for the activities mentioned above. In short, the locus of the Christian life is removed from the context of the concrete day-to-day, act-by-act existence of the individual Christian. The Christian's capital is invested in "right events," and "right belief," and the "right life" of Imitation goes begging.

Once again we find it necessary to guard against false understandings of Christianity which can undercut the command of Imitation. In Part one, the dehistoricizers threatened to evacuate the formal category of Imitation of its concretely applicable content. Now, the very life-context of Imitation is in jeopardy. This threat is based on Kierkegaard's own claim that Christianity is offensive to reason. If we accept the proposal that the source of Christianity's offensiveness has its locus in the affirmation of Biblical events or the confession of creeds, then the prime concern of Christianity will be focused on those events themselves. As a result of this, the Christian's faith will consist of affirming events and confessing creeds. Other things may be required or desirable, but a right-relationship to the events and creeds will be the conditio sine qua non of the Christian life. The primary locus of the Christian life, then, is removed from the concrete arena of everyday existence. Under such conditions, the life of Imitation is undercut completely, or at best is reduced to a non-essential or optional aspect of the Christian life.

I maintain (1) that Kierkegaard located the essence of the Christian life in a man's subjectivity and the outward expression of that subjectivity in daily life, and (2) that the Imitation of Christ is a dominant element in Kierkegaard's understanding of the Christian life. My stake in the present discussion is obvious. Due to the nature of the material and the subtlty of the issues, the following discussion is executed in a rather tightly knit, step-by-step style. The final outcome of the argument is quite simply stated, and has been set forth in the third paragraph of this Introduction. But some Kierkegaard scholars hold contrary opinions.[2] Thus, the network of steps by which I reach those conclusions is all-important. I felt that these steps should be presented in a continuous fashion, allowing the movement of thought to proceed unencumbered with other considerations. Consequently, I have devoted this long Introduction to a statement and consideration of the relevant issues involved and my reasons for dealing with them. With this said in advance, the context of the following argument should be clear. And the argument itself is thus permitted to proceed uninterrupted to its final conclusion. Let us begin.

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[2] The following commentators on Kierkegaard give the sort of interpretation which attributes -mistakenly, I believe- to Kierkegaard the notion that Christian doctrine is self-contradictory, a rational affront: Theophilus Nicolaus, a contemporary of Kierkegaard's; and Torsten Bohlin and Søren Holm, both writing since 1940 (N.H. Søe, "Kierkegaard's Doctrine of the Paradox," in A Kierkegaard Critique, pp. 207-227). More recently, James Collins has asserted that Kierkegaard proposed the necessity of a "crucifixion of the understanding" (James Collins, The Existentialists, Chicago, H. Regnery Co., Gateway Edition, 1952, p. 15). The battle rages on. Robert E. Larsen insists that Kierkegaard's Absolute Paradox is a "limit for thought," involving "logical incompatibility" (R.E. Larsen, "Kierkegaard's Absolute Paradox," The Journal of Religion, vol. XLII, no. 1, Jan. 1962, pp. 34-43). It is true that Kierkegaard once had a pseudonym say (in reference to Christianity), "I cannot get it into my head" (SUD 216; XI 197). But Kierkegaard makes it clear that the "head" is not logically offended, but merely dazzled and addled by the extraordinary, the judgmental, the challenging elements in Christianity. This is a far cry from a short-circuited ratio. More accurate and to the point, I believe, is Robert Herbert's view that "the paradox in the case of Christianity involves no logical impossibility" (Robert Herbert, "Two of Kierkegaard's Uses of 'Paradox,'" The Philosophical Review, vol. 70, Jan 1961, pp. 41-55, citation from p. 55). Another correct interpretation is given by E.D. Klemke who speaks of the Absolute Paradox as in conflict with one's self-centered "values," not one's scrupulous logical integrity (E.D. Klemke, "Some Misinterpretations of Kierkegaard," Hibbert Journal, LVII, 1958-59, p. 265ff. Cf. E.D. Klemke, "Logicality vs. Alogicality in the Christian Faith," Journal of Religion, 38, April 1958, pp. 107-115). I am greatly indebted to Paul L. Holmer's work in this area which I consider to be thoroughly researched, lucid, and definitive. (See especially the following works by Holmer: "Kierkegaard and Logic," Kierkegaardiana, II, Copenhagen, Munksgaard, 1957, pp. 25-42; "Scientific Language and the Language of Religion," Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, vol.1, no. 1, Oct. 1961, pp. 42-55; Theology and the Scientific Study of Religion, Minneapolis, T.S. Denison and Co., Inc., 1961, pp. 204ff.)

1. Scientific Reason and Christianity

On the dust jacket of a recent book about Kierkegaard is printed the following question: Is Christianity an intellectual absurdity? The question might well be asked whether or not Kierkegaard thought that in order for a man to be properly called a Christian, he must assent to some propositions which are in conflict with reason. Or, put another way: Did Kierkegaard consider Christianity an offense to reason?

Before examining Kierkegaard's answer to such a question, we should first pay heed to his definitions of the terms involved. Full scale definitions cannot be attempted here. Rather, the definitions given are pertinent and

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Although my conclusions in this discussion are no innovation, the arguments offered in support of them are constructed, I believe, in an original fashion.

adequate with respect to the present topic, and indicate the direction which a complete definition would take. And the discussion in the following paragraphs will afford the reader further information by giving "definitions in use." First, "Christianity." From the standpoint of this discussion, it should be said that for Kierkegaard, "Christianity is not a doctrine, but expresses a message about living."[3] Christianity is not composed of objective knowledge, is not simply phraseology, and is not the sum of doctrinal propositions.[4] On the contrary, Christianity finds its locus in a man's inwardness and subjectivity.[5]

According to Kierkegaard, if a man is offended by something, he would be repelled by that something, be indignant at and insulted by it, be affronted by its very existence. The specific details of any particular offensive situation would depend on the nature of the offending "thing" and the person offended. Details of this sort will be brought out in the examples given below.

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[3] VII 328.
This is my own translation of the Danish passage, "Christendommen er nu ingen Lære, men udtrykker en Existents-Modsigelse. . ." The Swenson-Lowrie translation of this passage is unnecessarily technical and misleading. It reads: "Christianity is not a doctrine, but an existential communication. . ." (CUP 339). I cite this comparison because this same sort of error (i.e., turning Kierkegaard's direct statements into terminological puzzles) is found quite often in the Swenson-Lowrie translation, especially on this issue of Christianity's relation to living.

[4] CUP 191-195 (VII 179-183).

[5] CUP 181-182 (VII 169-170).
If this definition appears to stack the cards in advance, I can only say that Kierkegaard himself so stacks them. Failure to note Kierkegaard's advance card-stacking has led to much misunderstanding and nonsense on this question.

That which is said to be offended by Christianity is called Forstand by Kierkegaard. It is translated variously by "reason" or "understanding." Just what Kierkegaard means by Forstand is difficult to say. Two possibilities of Kierkegaard's meaning are given below:[6]

1. Scientific Reason is that which causes a man to reject as groundless all propositions which do not qualify as objectively certain, evidentially demonstrable, experientially verifiable, and so forth.
2. Logical Reason is that which causes a man to reject as meaningless or incomprehensible all statements which violate its strict canons of word usage.

Now that we have in mind something of what Kierkegaard means by the terms Christianity, offense, and reason, let us see if scientific reason is offended by Christianity. The statement, "Jesus lived in the first century," is generally accepted by most members of Christian churches. Over the years, various kinds of so-called historical evidence have been marshalled in support of this statement. Ancient secular and religious documents and archeological findings have been persuasively presented on its behalf. Kierkegaard is well aware of this "quest for the historical Jesus." Yet he asserts that no amount of quantitative evidence can ever add up to certainty on historical questions: it can only approximate it. Kierkegaard defines doubt as "a protest against every conclusion that transcends immediate sensation and immediate cognition."[7] Thus, he concludes that

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[6] This two-fold analysis of reason is taken from lectures given by Professor Paul L. Holmer at the Yale Divinity School during the spring semester of 1961. Professor Holmer's analysis includes two other kinds of reason. One of them is a kind of common sense reasonableness. This will be discussed later. The other involves the Hegelian notion of Reason in History which governs the workings and developments of world history. My discussion of offense proceeds along the lines of Christianity's offense to individual men, not to Mankind in general or to the Universal Spirit of Man. Thus, I will not deal with this type of Reason in History. This is because of the fact that, despite Hegel's own genius for unity, common mortals must place the ultimate emphasis within Hegel's concrete-universal on the general at the expense of the individual. If my own inability to hold these two poles together is a sign of my lack of mental-spiritual power, I take heart in the company of D.F. Strauss, acclaimed as the best "Hegelian" of his day.

> it is impossible in the case of historical problems to reach an objective decision so certain that no doubt could disturb it.[8]

If a man were jealous of the honor of his scientific reason, he would be offended at being asked to affirm that without a doubt Jesus did live in the first century. If such an affirmation were a requisite to Church membership, the Scientific Reasoner would be duty-bound to remain a non-member.

Let us pause to review the steps taken in this discussion so far. A statement generally associated with Christianity was tested by scientific reason and found to be lacking in established certainty. In order for the Scientific Reasoner to affirm this statement, he would have to compromise his standards. This he refuses to do. Moreover, since a proper relationship to Christianity was made contingent upon his wholehearted affirmation of these statements, he felt obliged to remain outside the Church. In this case, it is clear that scientific reason was offended. The honor of science must not be sullied by association with such an objectionable statement -even if Churchmen do support it. Scientific Reason tucks in its skirts and hastens away from such questionable company.

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[7] PF 69 (IV 248).

[8] CUP 41 (VII 30).

In the situation described above, it is very clear that scientific reason has been offended. But let us look more closely at what caused the offense. In the case of scientific reason, the offense was caused by the claim of doubt-free certainty regarding Christianity's historical elements. And we have seen that the kind of Christianity which caused the Scientific Reasoner to take offense was a Christianity which (1) held as essential to its teaching some historical statements, and (2) demanded that its members harbor no doubts about their certainty. Let us call this kind of Christianity "Christianity H," in reference to its historical aspect.

Now let us recall that the kind of Christianity which Kierkegaard supports -let us call it "Christianity K"- is perfectly willing to acknowledge the lack of conclusive evidence regarding Christianity's historical elements. Unquestionably, says Kierkegaard, there is risk and doubt involved in a Christian's mental relationship to these elements. The evidential certainty of the historical elements of Christianity can only be approximated, never established.[9] However, we must also recall that Kierkegaard fought to protect the historical presupposition of Christianity. Sections one and two of chapter two have documented Kierkegaard's unrelenting commitment to the definite historical elements of the life of Jesus.

The outline below will help to show the similarities and differences between Christianity H and Christianity K on these points.

Christianity H	Christianity K
1. Certain historical statements are essential to the teachings of the Church.	1. Certain historical statements are essential to the teachings of the Church.
2. Church members must affirm these statements without doubt.	2. These statements can be affirmed only in the face of doubt.

An analysis of this outline will show that both Christianity H and Christianity K agree that certain historical statements are essential to the teachings of the Church. However, Christianity H insists on the objective certainty of these events, whereas Christianity K admits their objective uncertainty. From this analysis, it is clear that the Scientific Reasoner would be offended by Christianity H (as we have already seen) whereas he would not be offended by Christianity K. The kinds of claims which Christianity K makes regarding its historical elements measure up to the demands of the most scrupulous scientific reason. The Scientific Reasoner may dislike Christianity K for a variety of other reasons.

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[9] CUP 13-47 (VII 1-37).

But Christianity, according to Kierkegaard's understanding of it, offers nothing which can cause an offensive collision with scientific reason itself.

Kierkegaard could remain completely loyal to the historical side of Christianity, yet confess that his loyalty was not based on scientifically establishable proof. Therefore, he is perfectly able to combine an uncompromised scientific reason with his loyalty to the historical claims of Christianity. We recall the original question: Is Christianity offensive to Reason? In the past few pages, we have learned that the answer to this question depends on what kind of reason and what kind of Christianity we are talking about. So far, we have discovered that the kind of Christianity advocated by Kierkegaard is not offensive to what we have called scientific reason.

2. Logical Reason and Christianity

Now let us examine a situation in which logical reason is offended. (Logical reason was defined earlier as that which causes a man to reject as meaningless all statements which violate its strict canons of word usage.) Imagine a situation in which a church member feels that the statement, "Jesus Christ was fully man and fully God," is an essential part of the message of Christianity, and that assent to the statement is a necessary sign of a Christian man. Suppose that another man who is committed to logical reason defines the phrase "fully God" so that "God" cannot participate in any way whatsoever with the "fully human." Judged by these ground rules of language usage, the Church Member's statement violates the canons of word usage. The Logical Reasoner would protest this particular combining of the contradictories (according to him) "fully God" and "fully man" in a sentence, let alone in a person. The Logical Reasoner might point out to the Church Member the internal flaws in his statement. He might even go so far as to suggest that the statement be rephrased or withdrawn. But suppose that the Church Member persisted in proclaiming this creedal statement and in making assent to it a requirement for the Christian man. The Logical Reasoner would then feel justified in being offended at this illogical nonsense and the excluding use to which it was being put. Once again we have the situation in which a kind of reason, in this case logical reason, is offended by Christianity.

In summary, we can say that in this particular case the offense to logical reason was caused by the insistence on the necessary presence of a Christian doctrine composed of logically contradictory components. Thus, the Logical Reasoner was offended by a kind of Christianity which affirmed that (1) certain doctrinal statements (in this case ones deemed illogical by Logical Reasoners) are essential to its message, and (2) demanding that its members assent to these without hedging or qualification. Let us call this kind of Christianity, "Christianity D," in reference to its doctrinal aspect.

Let us now recall the kind of Christianity espoused by Kierkegaard. Nowhere does Kierkegaard suggest that the traditional doctrinal language of the Christian Church is outmoded, expendable, in error, or meaningless. He did say that Christianity is not a doctrine, but that is another question altogether. And he also accused the Danish state church officials of misusing the creeds. But it cannot be denied that Kierkegaard duly venerated the historic documents and formulae of the Church, and used their terminology freely and frequently and with respect throughout his writings. Kierkegaard is well known for the boldness and severity of his commitment to the Bible as determinant of Christian right belief and right living. He has said that Christ is the way (*Vej*), while the Bible itself is the guide (*Vejviser*).[10] We have already taken note of his efforts to remove the gag of extraneous speculation in order to let the Bible speak its message simply and directly. And Kierkegaard was confident that the Bible could speak directly to his readers without the intervention of scholarly commentaries and homiletical explanations.[11] And he deferred completely to the New Testament as the supreme teacher of the Christian man in matters of right action in life.[12] This simple devotion to

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[10] VIII 1 A 50.

[11] AC 119-120 (XIV 144).

[12] WL^{H} 199, 210, 261, etc. (IX 201, 213, 267, etc.).

Christianity's basic documents might even appear to out-orthodox orthodoxy.[13]

Of course, Kierkegaard did not approach the Bible in a vacuum. He was conversant and on good terms with the Biblical scholarship of his day, as well as with the traditional phrases and formulae which are the Church's heritage. The noted Danish theologian and Kierkegaard scholar, Niels H. Søe states that

> the highest authority for Kierkegaard is quite simply the teaching of the Bible. . .interpreted

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[13] A relevant study entitled Kierkegaard and the Bible concludes that Kierkegaard's thought was influenced by the Bible in a "continuous. . .creative. . .profound" manner (Paul S. Minear and Paul S. Morimoto, Kierkegaard and the Bible, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1953, p. 6). I definitely concur with this and with the further comment that "the influence of the Bible on Kierkegaard is just as subtle and elusive as it is pervasive" (Ibid., p. 7). In this case, it is particularly fortunate that this study was prepared by two scholars whose competence covers the Biblical texts as well as Kierkegaard's writings. Their research produced an index of over 3,000 separate places in Kierkegaard's writings where he refers, directly or obliquely, to about 1,500 different Scriptural passages. Of these 3,000 entries, 222 constitute Kierkegaard's deliberate Biblical exposition of over two pages in length. Of course, the numbers themselves mean little. But this material adds substance to the otherwise-documented assertions of those who have long argued for the pervasive Scriptural spirit of Kierkegaard's writings.

(It should be noted that this index covered almost all of Kierkegaard's works published during his lifetime, and about one-tenth of his twenty-volume private papers. Although mainly an index, this is the only such study I know of in English. There is a helpful Danish book of almost the same title which lists sixty various Biblical books, persons, and themes and arranges under them selected and relevant quotes from Kierkegaard's complete works and papers. It is P. Guillamore Hansen, Søren Kierkegaard og Bibelen, Copenhagen, P. Haase and Sons, 1923. This Danish book is not as complete as the English study, but its extensive journal entries and other quotations make it a valuable contribution to this neglected field of study. And the Danish author's conclusions about Kierkegaard's debt to the Bible match those of P.S. Minear and P.S. Morimoto.

> fundamentally according to the ecclesiastical theology he had learned from his father and not least from the sermons of Mynster.[14]

Kierkegaard constantly used the terminology of Christian dogmatics and apparently felt no reluctance in doing so.[15] A look at Kierkegaard's discussion of the person and work of Jesus Christ will serve to illustrate this point. The flavor of the terminology here suggests no iconoclastic tendencies

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[14] N.H. Søe, "Kierkegaard's Doctrine of Paradox," Kierkegaard Critique, p. 215.

[15] This sort of directly biographical statement is difficult to establish by documentation. In his published works, Kierkegaard appears to be aware of the names and issues of his theological scene, past and present. But this is not easy to show on paper. However, I can cite some facts about his papers (Papirer, unpublished during his lifetime) which indicate his working familiarity with his theological heritage and milieu. Listed below are some of the key religious figures which Kierkegaard referred to in the twenty volumes of his Papirer. To be sure, many of those mentioned are treated only in passing, but in most cases there are at least several significant entries. In the parentheses after each name is a number indicating how many times Kierkegaard made reference to these names. (This material is conveniently located in an index compiled by the tedious labors of Kalle Sorainen, a Finnish student of Kierkegaard. This complete and very helpful index -the only one of its kind I know of- has not been published, although a few photostatic copies are privately circulated. It is entitled simply, Navneregister til Søren Kierkegaards Papirer.

Here is a list of some major figures referred to by Kierkegaard: St. Paul (55), Tertullian (20), Augustine (29), Anselm (9), Calvin (8), Luther (186). Kierkegaard frequently referred to the prominent writers on religion of his own day: Daub (15), Marheineke (3), Rudelback (27), Schopenhauer (32), Baader (9), D.F. Strauss (1), Schleiermacher (24), Sibbern (22), N.H. Clausen (12). To give some perspective on the broad scope of these entries, I should say that Kierkegaard also referred to John Wesley (3), Socrates (236!), Shakespeare (41), "Don Juan" (30), and Benjamin Franklin (6). The personal nature of the Papirer entries is indicated in the frequent mention of those with whom his life was closely linked: Regina Olsen (58), Meyer Goldschmidt (126), Bishop Mynster (273).

My prime intention in citing this material is to support the claim that Kierkegaard was at least conversant with the theological tradition and writing of his and other ages. But lest anyone be tempted to found a new Kierkegaard-Nummerologie-Geschichte-Schule based on this sort of material, he should be discouraged from doing so by the knowledge that his overall schema would have to account for such various entries as:

Ali-Ben-Giad (1), The Dalai Lama (2), Nero (10), H.C. Ørsted (12), Spinoza (23), Sancho Panza (4), Sam Warren (2), and Jørgen Jørgensen (4).

Drawing at least circumstantial documentation from another sort of evidence, it can be said that, according to Niels Thulstrup's catalogue of Kierkegaard's library (Niels Thulstrup, *Søren Kierkegaards Bibliotek*, pp. 28-65), Kierkegaard owned at least eighteen Bibles in original languages and translations into Danish and German, seventy-eight Biblical commentaries and lexica, forty-one volumes of patristic writings in original languages and translations, one-hundred twenty-seven books on dogmatics, and over three hundred volumes of miscellaneous theological works. A great many of these books were published before Kierkegaard's student days. And since Kierkegaard was at that time wealthy and somewhat of a spendthrift, in addition to being a brilliant and knowledgeable student, it is quite probable that he purchased many of them during his student days. And we may presume that he did not leave them unread, since he passed his theological examinations *cum laude* in 1840. (Walter Lowrie, *Kierkegaard*, vol. II. New York, Harper Torchbooks, 1962, p. 188.) But, as I said, this is all quite circumstantial as well as hypothetical.

But the weight of such evidence is perhaps increased by the claim of H.P. Rohde, Danish fellow-traveller in Kierkegaard circles, that Kierkegaard's library could easily have been up to five times as large as Niels Thulstrup indicates in his catalogue. Rohde accuses Thulstrup of an unnecessarily conservative reading of the auction catalogue from the sale of Kierkegaard's private library shortly after his death. (H.P. Rohde, "Om Søren Kierkegaard Som Bogsamler," published in *Fund og Forskning*, VIII, Copenhagen, The Royal Danish Library, 1961, pp. 79-127.) (It is an irrelevant but historically curious fact that at this public auction the Royal Danish Library only purchased eighty of the books from Kierkegaard's personal library. And these were not selected for their relationship to Kierkegaard, but because the Royal Library's circulating inventory happened to lack those particular titles!) In an insulting and condescending reply to Rohde's criticism of him, Thulstrup launches a counter-attack in self-defense. (Niels Thulstrup, "Om Kierkegaards Bibliotek," *Kierkegaardiana*, IV, Copenhagen, Munksgaard, 1962, pp. 1-5-110.) The spectacle of these two adults engaged in a humorless (to them) pitched battle over the number of books in Kierkegaard's library is illustrative of one phase of or even leanings toward modernism.[16] The creedal overtones of Kierkegaard's words are too obvious to miss. He confesses that Jesus Christ is "very God,"[17] "the Only Begotten of the Father,"[18] whose will is in "eternal harmony" with the Father's.[19] For Kierkegaard, Jesus Christ was and is eternal,[20] pre-existent with the Father,[21] the one who left legions of angels behind him in heaven,[22] the Expected One,[23] the

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Danish Kierkegaard scholarship which has become ingrown and sterile. One can imagine the fun Kierkegaard could have describing this ludicrous tug-of-war over an auction catalogue.

[16] The quotation below is very expressive of Kierkegaard's general stand on the "externals" of church life. He felt that since the sickness of the church in his day lay at the heart of things, these externals needed no treatment. Clerical tinkering with the dogmatics will not of itself increase the faith of the laity. The "external" referred to in this quote is the Danish church's relationship to the state. Nevertheless, the point made is general enough to all its application to the question at hand, that of church doctrine.

> I. . .offer a reward to any person who can find in the whole array of my books, one single proposal looking toward any outward change, or even the slightest hint of such a proposal. . .or something that might in the most distant manner suggest that I believed that the trouble lies in something external, that an outward change is indispensable, that an outward change would help us.
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> Christianity is inwardness, subjectification . . . (XIII 438-439. Cited by D.F. Swenson, op. cit., p. 30.).

[17] TC 1 35 (XII 127).

[18] Ibid.

[19] GS 63 (VIII 347).

[20] TC 195 (XII 183).

[21] GS 47 (VIII 336).

[22] PF 45 (IV 222).

[23] TC 51 (XII 46).

God-Man,[24] omniscient,[25] the one who bore the burden of our sins,[26] the Savior of the world[27] who rose from the dead,[28] and who will come again triumphantly to earth.[29] The frequency and respect with which Kierkegaard cites the orthodox and traditional terminology provides very little opportunity for those who wish to prove his disloyalty to the doctrinal formulations current in his day.[30]

I cannot presume to demonstrate Kierkegaard's orthodoxy by merely documenting the frequent and serious manner in which he made use of orthodox terms and categories of thought.

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[24] SUD 247ff, TC 216, etc. (XI 225ff, XII 203, etc.).

[25] CD 278 (XII 278).

[26] GS 22 (VIII 318). TC 270 (XII 258).

[27] GS 51 (VIII 338). JY 81, 189 (XII 345, 450).

[28] ED v.4 58, GS 18-19 (V 111, VIII 314-315).

[29] TC 198 (XII 186).

[30] Basing his conclusion on another sort of evidence, Professor N.H. Søe also declares that Kierkegaard abides by an "essential doctrinal orthodoxy." Professor Søe states that,

> All closer study of Kierkegaard, whether in his pseudonymous works or those written under his own name, will reveal how faithfully he adheres throughout to the 'dogmatics' which was considered in his time to be comparatively orthodox. It is extremely seldom that he consciously differs from this, as in the case to some extent with his doctrine of original sin in The Concept of Dread . . . (N.H. Søe, "Kierkegaard's Doctrine of Paradox," *Kierkegaard Critique*, p. 223.).

Also, the British Kierkegaard scholar T.H. Croxall states that "without arguing [Kierkegaard] accepts all the tenets of Christianity and he is thoroughly orthodox therein." (T.H. Croxall, *Kierkegaard Commentary*, London, J. Nisbet, 1956, p. 206.).

But what I have shown is that Kierkegaard's emphasis on inwardness did not cause him to eliminate from his working vocabulary the time-honored terms of the Christian tradition. For the purpose of this discussion, I am satisfied if the reader grants that Kierkegaard did in fact use these terms freely and openly.

Yet for all of Kierkegaard's honor to doctrine, he is unwilling to let the matter rest there. Kierkegaard contends that a man's confession of creeds can mean many things. It can be an integral part of his deep-going, genuine faith. But it can also be a vacuous, conditioned response to the rote learning of a childhood catechism class. It might be the price the ambitious hypocrite pays for membership in a socially acceptable organization. Or it could be any number of things which have nothing whatsoever to do with the inward, subjective expression-in-life of a man's faith which Kierkegaard insists is the core of Christianity. In fact, Kierkegaard goes so far as to say that the Church's insistence upon creedal orthodoxy can and does serve as a kind of works righteousness wherein a man considers his salvation secure if he gives the proper verbal responses to the catechetical questions.

Kierkegaard believes that a man's relationship to Christianity is not based on whether he "mouthes" the doctrine, but on whether he "does" the doctrine. Rather than easily garnering God's favor through creedal orthodoxy, a man must relentlessly work to hammer out his relationship to God on the demanding anvil of life. The shape of a man's day to day living, not his choice of creeds, determines his relationship to God. Kierkegaard might well have talked of an orthodox life, since he evaluated a man's Christianity more by judging how he lived than by listening to his creed reading. (This point will be discussed further in Division three.) For now I will cite -with Kierkegaard's complete approval, I am sure- some words attributed to Jesus: "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I tell you?"[31]

We have now completed the excursions into the areas of Kierkegaard's use of orthodox language and his views on the relationship of creeds to the Christian life. The conclusions which can be drawn from this material are given below in an outline comparing Christianity D and Christianity K.

Christianity D	Christianity K
1. Certain doctrines are an essential part of the Church's message.	1. Certain doctrines are an essential part of the Church's message.
2. Proper relationship to Christianity is contingent upon assent to these doctrines.	2. Assent to these doctrines is in itself no indication whatsoever of a man's proper relationship to Christianity.

We can see from this chart that Christianity K and Christianity D agree that certain doctrines are essential to the Church's message. But the difference appears in that Christianity D insists that its members give assent to these doctrines to remain in good standing. Whereas for Kierkegaard, presence of faith is not demonstrated by a man's words or deeds alone; but rather lies in the area of inwardness and subjectivity. Thus, Christianity K insists that a man's assertion or denial of doctrinal statements tells you nothing significant about his relationship to God.

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[31] Luke 6:46.

We are now in a position to state the original question in a more precise fashion: Would the Logical Reasoner be offended by Christianity K? Kierkegaard's emphasis on the personal and inward nature of the faith could lead one to the conclusion that he therefore de-emphasizes and de-values the importance of the Church's formal doctrines, in order to champion some sort of ineffable interiority. The Logical Reasoner would be pleased by this conclusion and would no doubt compliment Kierkegaard on his good sense in shedding the encrustation of outmoded and illogical creedal statements.\ But the fact is that Kierkegaard does not dismiss or de-value the Christian doctrines as such. He deplored their misuse, but he did not disparage the doctrines themselves. However, his talk about Christianity's not being a doctrine is often subtle, and is easily and frequently distorted. Kierkegaard was well aware that people would misunderstand him, and he carefully warned his future readers in words such as the following:

> Now if I might escape the fate of having a facile thinker explain to a reading public how stupid my entire book (Concluding Unscientific Postscript) is, as is more than sufficiently evident from my willingness to be responsible for such an assertion that Christianity is not a doctrine.

> Let us try to understand one another. Surely it is one thing for something to be a philosophical doctrine which desires to be intellectually grasped and speculatively understood, and quite another thing to be a doctrine that proposes to be realized in existence.[32]

This statement perplexes the Logical Reasoner. He wonders if Kierkegaard is here guilty of a sleight-of-hand trick? Has he stressed inwardness, thereby appeasing the Logical Reasoner, only to slip the doctrine back in once the Logical Reasoner has turned his back? Is Kierkegaard trying to have his cake and eat it too?

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[32] CUP 339 (VII 328).

There are those who feel that there is such a thing as an autonomous, speculative reason "in" man. And they consider this reason to be the "seat" of true doctrine, assent to which constitutes not the least of the requirements of the Christian man. Those who hold such a position are naturally critical of Kierkegaard's position. James Collins accuses Kierkegaard of "setting faith off from Speculative reason," and of giving inadequate analysis of "the office of reason [which lays] the foundations of natural religion and [prepares] for faith." (James Collins, The Mind of Kierkegaard, Chicago, Henry Regnery Co., 1953, p. 227.) And Theodor Haecker (who favors "that rare metaphysical, Platonic-Aristotelian-Thomistic passion for truth itself") is greatly disappointed that he does not find in Kierkegaard

> that strong and clear, burning intellectual desire for the unalloyed perfection and purity of the true doctrine . . . which at the same period gave Newman no rest until with sorrow he was forced for the sake of truth to abandon the Anglican Church and return to the Church (Theodor Haecker, Kierkegaard the Cripple, tr. C. Van O. Bruyn, New York, Philosophical Library, 1950, pp. 19-20.).

I am sure that Kierkegaard would have had respect for such a careful scholar as James Collins and would have enjoyed debating with him. And although Newman separates right belief and right living more than Kierkegaard permits; nonetheless, they would have seen eye to eye on many issues. But an incautious over-simplifier like Haecker, guilty as he is of much that Kierkegaard warned against, would have felt keenly the sharp scorn and dialectical dissection which Kierkegaard could employ so deftly.

I believe that this puzzling situation can be unravelled. Once again in this cramped space I cannot do justice to all the various facets involved. Nor can I engage in dialogue with the legions of commentators on Kierkegaard's treatment of this point. But I will try to point to the solution of the puzzle by telling a story.

Suppose that Kierkegaard, upon hearing the Logical Reasoner's accusation of sleight-of-hand, invited him up to his flat for tea and cakes one afternoon. The Logical Reasoner accepts the invitation, but resolves not to be disarmed by this hospitality. Once seated with cup of tea in hand, he presses in, demanding to know if Kierkegaard really believes that Jesus was fully God and also fully man. Since Kierkegaard often spoke that way, we might assume that he would readily answer, "Yes." The Logical Reasoner then demands to know just why Kierkegaard keeps such a formula around when he stresses the inwardness of faith. Kierkegaard, passing the sugar, explains that some very venerable fathers of the Church have framed formulae such as this, and that many great Christian saints and martyrs have confessed them. Since these words have travelled in such glorious company, they certainly have earned a respected place among the treasures of the Church, and ought not to be lightly dismissed. Then Kierkegaard, passing the cream, asks the Logical Reasoner if he has ever read much about Jesus who, after all, provides the occasion for such formulae framing. The Logical Reasoner, suspecting a dodge, abruptly asks

Kierkegaard if a man could be a Christian without confessing the fully God-fully man formula. Kierkegaard leans back in his chair and says that he certainly hopes so, since the formula was not framed until well after many of Jesus' faithful followers had died. Then Kierkegaard, passing the lemon, asks if the Logical Reasoner has not heard that Jesus saves sinners. The Logical Reasoner, a bit embarrassed by this turn in the conversation, says, "Let's not get into that sort of thing. What I want from you is a straightforward answer to the question: What is the place of doctrinal statements in the life of the Christian man? . . . And kindly restrain the evangelism." "Do my references to Jesus and man's sin offend you?" asks Kierkegaard. "You want me to discuss the doctrine, whereas the really important thing is to reach back behind the doctrine to the events which the doctrine seeks to celebrate and formalize." According to this point of view, the emphasis should be shifted from the formulae about Jesus to Jesus himself, from the creeds to the Christ. The formulae have their place certainly. But their glory is not their own; it is the reflected radiance from the Son of God. And the centuries of faithful confessors have lent the blessing of their witness to such words. Thus, it is here, in the lives of the Lord and the heroes of the faith that one comes into contact with the pulsing, throbbing, rich inner core of Christianity. No words can capture this. No phrases dare usurp its primacy.

The Logical Reasoner is silent, thinking. Then he speaks. "If what you say is true, then my logical attack on doctrinal phrases is not directed at the core of Christianity at all. In fact, the core of Christianity seems to be such that my kind of logic cannot appropriately be applied to it. I am equipped to do battle with words and phrases, but you direct me to people -and such people!" The Logical Reasoner is offended at words, but if the core of Christianity is not words, then he was not significantly offended. It seems that Christianity deals less with broken logical rules than with broken and contrite hearts. The Logical Reasoner may still think that some Christian doctrinal statements are logically absurd. However, he now realizes that this is not a significant complaint against the kind of Christianity which is not concerned to unravel what he calls absurdity.

There is certainly an abundance of doctrinal language in currency. And some of it may look absurd to the logicians. But, for Kierkegaard, Christ is infinitely more important than the doctrine.[33] "Christianity is not a system of dogma far removed from life, but the Life and the Way itself."[34] Thus we ask once again the original question: Is Christianity offensive to Reason? As in the case of scientific reason, we have seen that the answer to this question depends on the kind of Christianity and the kind of Reason you are talking about. On the basis of the above discussion, we can safely say that to the question, "Is your understanding of Christianity offensive to logical reason?," Kierkegaard would answer an emphatic "No."

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[33] TC 107-109 (XII 100-102).

[34] Gregor Malantschuk, Kierkegaard's Way to the Truth, p. 76.

By way of concluding the discussion so far, it is remarked that anyone today who explores Kierkegaard's ideas on Christianity and offended reason enters a jungle in which the undergrowth of secondary material is frighteningly dense and growing at an alarming rate. It is a jungle where countless issues lurk ominously behind every tree, and turning your back on a primary source can prove fatal. But such perils are the student's constant companions. And he does not begrudge them if the journey is worthwhile.

Many explorers of Kierkegaard's thought on Christianity and offended reason have plunged into the jungle of verification and logical canons. If they had paid closer attention to Kierkegaard's definitions of the terms involved -especially his understanding of what Christianity is and is not- they could have saved themselves the trouble.

We have watched a Scientific Reasoner and a Logical Reasoner as they launched successful attacks against what they thought was Kierkegaard's understanding of Christianity. In the end they discovered that their anger was directed at the wrong object. Turning to assault Kierkegaard's understanding of Christianity, they found to their surprise that it was not an enemy at all. That is to say, it was not incompatible with their own principles, as they had originally thought it was. In short, they discovered that Kierkegaard's understanding of Christianity is not offensive to scientific reason and logical reason.

3. Comfortable Reason and Christianity.

Although the preceding discussion yielded the negative result of eliminating both scientific reason and logical reason as the object of Christianity's offensiveness, something positive has been gained thereby. Kierkegaard does, in fact, say that Christianity is offensive to reason. However, we have seen that this statement can be given various interpretations. I have proposed in the discussion above that a proper interpretation of Kierkegaard's statement must arise out of the context of his understanding of what Christianity is. And it was noted how failure to take proper account of this context can lead to erroneous conclusions. We have seen that in this context both scientific reason and logical reason are eliminated as candidates for Christianity's offensiveness. I now assert that there is another kind of reason which Christianity does offend deeply, and that it is this which Kierkegaard means by Forstand (reason). This third kind of reason I shall call "comfortable reason." And I propose to demonstrate that this comfortable reason qualifies eminently as being offended by Christianity.

Before proceeding with that demonstration, however, we shall consider briefly the meaning of the term "subjectivity" in the context of Kierkegaard's thought. Using the outmoded spatial-functional metaphor, we can say that a man's subjectivity is a part of his mind which has responsibility for dealing with certain areas of his life. The sorts of considerations which come under the category of subjectivity have to do with such things as a man's evaluation of himself, his attitudes toward other people, his concern for the future, his degree of attachment to the rules of his society, his ideas of what significant achievement is, and so forth. Each man, as he matures, will fill in the forms of these various considerations with a content which is uniquely personal to him. Through the various experiences of his life, a man will gradually develop his own set of "life values" -his own discriminating mind-set and perspective on life. The "location" of this mind-set is "in" a man's subjectivity, and those considerations which the mind-set controls are the considerations of a man's subjectivity listed above.

Although a man's subjective life values are always complex and intertwined, some dominant trend or trends can be discerned. And this trend will give a distinctive color and shape to whatever a man thinks, says, and does within the area of subjectivity. For example, if a man's orientation to life is such that he primarily seeks to maximize his sensual pleasure, then he will evaluate other people in terms of their potential yield of sensual gratification.[35]

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[35] These last two paragraphs and the following material should be read in the context of Division one which dealt with the related topics of self, life-pattern, choice.

Comfortable reason is the name given to a particular kind of dominant trend in a man's subjectivity.[36] If a man's life values are determined by comfortable reason, his energies

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[36] Comfortable Reason is a species of the genus Common Reasonableness. Common Reasonableness is the name I give to the complex pattern of instincts, habits, **mores**, and codes which dominates a community's overall subjectivity. This Common Reasonableness appears to be drawn almost unconsciously and often uncritically from some basic ur-fund of ideals, horse-sense, defense mechanisms, pragmatics, and what have you. Of course, this is no static arrangement. The members of a society interact with their Common Reasonableness - changing, reinforcing, and re-interpreting it. But on the whole one can speak as I have above. For instance, if a man's life values are determined by a Common Reasonableness, he will conduct himself in accord with the dictates of the community in which he lives. Certainly, most large societies are capable of absorbing and even rewarding vastly different sorts of people: achievers and dreamers, saints and scoundrels, affirmers and cynics, and so forth. But the point is that the society sets the limits to the range of options, basing its decisions on its Common Reasonableness. Those who insist on deviating too far are removed by one means or another. The community -through its exercise of Common Reasonableness- establishes who is acceptable and who is not. Also, this Common Reasonableness permeates specific everyday behavior. For example, let us say that everyone in a certain community believes that it makes sense to come in out of the rain. If a man persists in staying needlessly out in the rain, his peers conclude that he is either uninformed, demented, or obstinate. In short, he is exhibiting unreasonable behavior.

Given the tolerance of most societies, a variety of life-patterns are considered reasonable, even if they are not all understood or accepted to the same degree. The community can sanction the man who seeks to achieve a smooth-running, easy-going life of comfort and security. We will call the dominant trend in such a man's subjectivity, "Comfortable Reason." The same society can consider reasonable -although not so preferable- the life of the chance-taker, the courter of danger, the gambler. He acts in accord with what might be called "Adventurous Reason." Then there is the man -reasonable in a sense, perhaps envied, though not condoned- who enjoys the freedom of drifting, beach-combing, bumming, wandering. His daimon might be called "Footloose Reason." These three kinds of Reason are all possible species under the genus Common Reasonableness. That is to say, a variety of accepted life-patterns can exist within any one society. But the point is made again: the society does the sanctioning, and -if it will be directed toward securing the kind of life desired by comfortable reason. Such a life is characterized by a cautious reasonableness which rejects any threats to its present state of self-controlled well-being. It is a kind of lazy Sunday afternoon version of Cicero's "Appetitus rationi obediant" (Let the passions be amenable to reason). It shuns any imbalances which could upset its easy-going environment. To all the particular areas of life which come under the heading of subjectivity, comfortable reason gives the flavor of a pervasive egoistic conservatism.

At this point we should recall that, for Kierkegaard, Christianity is centered in subjectivity. According to Kierkegaard the Christian man is one whose subjectivity is dominated by a set of life values determined by Christianity.

We now have before us sufficient information to enable us to judge whether or not comfortable reason is capable of

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wishes- polices its ranks at will. Any appeal to authority other than the society's Common Reasonableness is ruled out of order.

In the following discussion, I have selected Comfortable Reason as the species on which to focus. It seems to me that Comfortable Reason contrasts directly and dramatically with Christianity's Imitation of Christ. Of course, the pattern of Imitation conflicts with many "Reasons" and in a variety of ways. In fact, the Christian idea of authority is completely at odds with the general notion of society's establishing its own rules and being its own judge. The very notion that a human consensus is the highest court of appeal is idolatrous to the Christian who looks above society to God Almighty as the sole Lawgiver and Judge. The conflict of Comfortable Reason with the command of Imitation is an instance of the more widespread conflict between Christianity and Common Reasonableness. It is a central instance chosen for its relevancy to this dissertation. But the more general context should be kept in mind.

being offended by Christianity K. In order for comfortable reason to be offended by Christianity K, the offensive elements of Christianity K must be able to collide with the elements of comfortable reason. (The lack of this collision is precisely the cause of Christianity's lack of offense to scientific reason and logical reason.) Before offense can occur, Christianity K must compete for the same loyalties which comfortable reason seeks to control. We have seen that both Christianity and comfortable reason are concerned with the considerations of subjectivity. And both of them possess a set of life values which each intends to install as the dominant trend within a man's subjectivity. The Christian man is one whose subjectivity is dominated by a Christian set of life-values, while the Comfortable Reasoner's subjectivity is under the control of those life-values determined by comfortable reason. Thus we conclude that since both comfortable reason and Christianity K seek to occupy the same territory, as it were, a conflict is at least possible.

In order to determine whether an offensive collision actually takes place, we will examine what happens when comfortable reason meets Christianity K. The analysis of this meeting will be given in terms of an encounter between a Comfortable Reasoner and a strange and haunting figure from the pages of Kierkegaard called "The Inviter" (Indbyderen).[37] We shall, as does Kierkegaard, let the

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[37] The figure of the Inviter and the theme of the Christian Invitation are found in Kierkegaard's works as early as 1846,

Inviter speak for Christianity, and see if his speech offends the Comfortable Reasoner. The Inviter addresses all men, including the Comfortable Reasoner, as follows: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." This invitation to "rest" sounds quite appealing. Even if one is not particularly heavy laden, the offer of rest is always welcome and certainly not offensive as it stands. But the "if-then" form of the invitation implies that one must "come unto" the Inviter before one can receive the promised rest. Before committing himself to any change in his status quo, the cautious Comfortable Reasoner wants to know just what is involved in this process of coming unto the Inviter.

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and recur until his death in 1855. There are some passing references to these topics in Concluding Unscientific Postscript (1846) (CUP 98, 392; VII 87, 380), and Christian Discourses (1848) contains a central chapter on them (CD 269, 272ff.; X 267, 270ff.). The whole of Training in Christianity (1850) is dominated by Jesus the Inviter, and For Self-Examination (1851) devotes half a chapter to this theme (SE 95f.; XII 360f). One of the pamphlets which Kierkegaard issued during his so-called attack upon Danish Christendom has a paragraph concerning the Inviter (1855) (AC 286; XIV 356).

Among the different names of Jesus which Kierkegaard employs, those of the Inviter and the Pattern receive as much emphasis as the names Savior and Lord. It can be said that the first names point to the task laid upon the Christian, while the later two point to the divine status of the giver of the task. The importance of the Inviter within the Kierkegaardian literature can be seen if one considers that the Inviter invites people to come after him, to go his way, to walk in his footsteps, to follow him, to resemble him, to imitate him, to be contemporary with him, to be glorified with him. All these various themes, so central to the core of Kierkegaard's specifically Christian authorship, can easily be arranged under the general heading of the Inviter and his Invitation.

The Comfortable Reasoner soon discovers that, along with the promised rest, the Inviter intends also to bestow on him the forgiveness of sins. This appears to be part of what the Inviter means by rest. The drawback, from the standpoint of the Comfortable Reasoner, is that in order to be forgiven one must acknowledge one's sinfulness. He had simply planned on receiving rest, and now he is subjected to this. Humiliating! After all, he does have his pride. Kierkegaard considers this an appropriate response, however, since he holds that "the Christian doctrine of sin is pure impertinence against man, accusation upon accusation."[38] Thus, the demand that the Comfortable Reasoner plead guilty to this charge of sinfulness strikes at a central element in his subjectivity, his high evaluation of himself. Since the Comfortable Reasoner's life value orientation involves a high degree of self-esteem, he will no doubt be offended by the Inviter's suggestion of his sinfulness.[39]

But suppose that the Comfortable Reasoner were able to swallow his pride and confess some sins, hoping thereby to receive the gift of undisturbed rest. All too soon, however, he hears again the Inviter's beckoning voice: "Come unto me." What more can he want? The Comfortable Reasoner thought that after that initial unpleasantness about the sins, the Inviter would go away and leave him alone. But that is not to be the case. Kierkegaard asserts that if a man fully accepts the Inviter's call, he will never be free of the presence of the Inviter, nor from the demands he makes on his followers.[40] Kierkegaard's sense of this impinging presence can be seen in an entry in his diary. Here he comments that if one lived on the barren and treeless heath where "all lies naked, bared before God," where there are "no . . . nooks and crannies in which our minds can hide," then one could feel the full impact of the Old Testament verse, "Whither shall I flee from Thy presence?"[41] Elsewhere Kierkegaard communicates the fearful, almost eerie, aspect of this unavoidable presence by mentioning the pictorial representation of the Christian God as an eye.[42] For Kierkegaard, the situation is analogous to the classroom where the teacher's presence guarantees that the pupils behave properly.[43] The demanding side of the Inviter is seen in Kierkegaard's striking figure in which an obedient mastiff makes no move unless his Master gives the command.[44] For Kierkegaard, the Inviter (and thus Christianity) emerges as an awesome person whose inescapable presence places compelling demands on the Christian's life.

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[38] SUD 226 (XI 206). Cf. SUD 176ff. (XI 155ff.).

[39] Kierkegaard discusses this particular aspect of offense in various places in his works. Chief among them is Sickness Unto Death, where he devotes a long section to it (SUD 214-231. XI 194-211). A good treatment of this theme, although couched in more general terms, is found in the first discourse in a book titled (in English) Crucial Situations in Human Life (pp. 1-41). An excellent secondary source on this topic is Hermann Diem's Kierkegaard's Dialectic of Existence (tr. H. Knight. London, Oliver and Boyd, 1959, pp. 69-80).

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[40] TC 14-15 (XII 9-10).

[41] The Diary of Søren Kierkegaard, ed. Peter P. Rohde, tr. G.M. Andersen (New York: The Wisdom Library, 1960), entry no. 43 (III A 78).

[42] COD 78 (IV 357). See also Kierkegaard's discussion of God as "the observer" who never ceases to hear and see all that men do. (WL" 347-356; IX 355-365).

[43] JY 189 (XII 449).

It is not difficult to imagine the reaction to all this by the Comfortable Reasoner who greatly values his independence. The suggestion that he assume the role of a subservient pupil, let alone an obedient pet dog, is an affront to his highly prized ideal of free speech and unrestricted movement. The prospect of being accompanied by the Inviter's relentless and restrictive presence is one he does not cherish. This brash Inviter presumes to command the very life value of independence which the Comfortable Reasoner so covets. No promise of rest can be worth such vassaldom. He refuses to pay such an outrageous price, and is affronted by the Inviter's gall in daring to propose such a thing.

But before returning to his Sunday hammock, the Comfortable Reasoner asks -out of curiosity- what sort of commands the Inviter gives. Perhaps if they did not interfere too much with his way of life he might consider the offer again. And by "way of life" he here means his and his family's security, his various insurance programs, his business goals, his community responsibilities, and so on. The Inviter speaks:

> If your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and

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[44] Cited in AC x (XI 2 A 423).

> throw it from you.[45]
>
> He who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.[46]
>
> Take no thought for the morrow.[47]

"Enough!" shouts the Comfortable Reasoner, and flees from the scene.

Later in the day, the Comfortable Reasoner makes some inquiries regarding the sort of life the Inviter leads. The results of his inquiries leave him even more convinced that the Inviter is a fool, along with anyone who takes him seriously. We hear the Comfortable Reasoner exclaiming (in Kierkegaard's terms):

> What has he done to provide for his future? Nothing. Has he any definite job? No. What prospects has he? None . . . To join myself to him, no, I thank you. Praise God, I have not yet entirely lost my wits.[48]

The Inviter would offer no rebuttal to this charge. The Comfortable Reasoner has summed up the situation accurately. For, says Kierkegaard,

> to say it short and sharp: this is the very definite utterance of the New Testament, that Christianity, . . . must be in the highest degree an 'offense' to the natural man, that he must regard Christianity as the highest treason and the true Christian as the most scurvy traitor against humanity . . .[49]

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[45] Matt. 18:9.

[46] Matt. 10:37b.

[47] Matt. 6:34 (The Holy Bible. New York, American Bible Society, 1928).

[48] TC 47 (XII 42).

[49] JY 154 (XII 416).

The Comfortable Reasoner's well-regulated life of moderation and reasonableness is clearly scandalized to the hilt by its confrontation with Christianity K.

The Comfortable Reasoner is vexed by his strange and scandalous encounter with the Inviter. He might have been willing to shave his head; but lose an eye? Never! And he is irritated at the nerve of this chap who sets himself above sacred family obligations. Such arrogance! Furthermore, who could foretell what chaos would reign if people took no thoughts for the future? It is obvious that every intelligent man who values his exercise of free choice and personal prerogatives will condemn the Inviter. Precisely at this point in the discussion we are provided with the full context for clear understanding of the following entries from Kierkegaard's diary:

> People try to persuade us that the objections against Christianity spring from doubt. That is a complete misunderstanding. The objections against Christianity spring from insubordination, the dislike of obedience, rebellion against all authority.[50]
>
> Pascal says: it is so difficult to believe because it is so difficult to suffer.[51]
>
> Quarrelling with people about what Christianity is is a mistake . . . because they suspect that it is rather easy to grasp but also that it would interfere with their lives.[52]

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[50] Dru 630 (VIII A 7).

[51] Dru 608 (VII A 151).

[52] P.P. Rohde (ed.), op. cit., entry no. 203 (X 3 A 285).

Not only is the Inviter mad, protests the Comfortable Reasoner, but he is also a danger to our birthright of free choice, a threat to any sane society, and a menace to the stability of our way of life. Away with him![53]

Thus, we can conclude that Christianity K consistently and unrelentingly conflicts with comfortable reason as they both seek to establish dominion over a man's subjectivity. There is no possible modus vivendi whereby both sides can be appeased. When the life values of comfortable reason dominate a man's subjectivity, they dictate a style of life which is directly antithetical to that style of life which would result from a subjectivity dominated by Christianity's life values. The conflict is inevitable and complete.

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[53] Aldous Huxley was well aware of the head-on collision of religious passion with the calculating ratio of the protectors of the stable society. In his Brave New World he paints a classic picture of an encounter between a religious youth reared among the New Mexico Indians, and Mustapha Mond, that arch-manipulator of the New World whose title is "Resident World Controller, London Area." The youth is speaking -

"If you allowed yourselves to think of God, you wouldn't allow yourselves to be degraded by pleasant vices. You'd have a reason for bearing things patiently, for doing things with courage. I've seen it with the Indians."

"I'm sure you have," said Mustapha Mond. "But then we aren't Indians. There isn't any need for a civilized man to bear anything that's seriously unpleasant. And as for doing things -Ford forbid that he should get it into his head. It would upset the whole social order if men started doing things on their own."

"What about self-denial then? If you had a God, you'd have a reason for self-denial."

"But industrial civilization is only possible when there's no self-denial. Self-indulgence up to the very limits of hygiene and economics. Otherwise the wheels stop turning."

"You'd have a reason for chastity!" said [the boy], blushing a little as he spoke the words.

"But chastity means passion . . . and passion . . . means instability. And instability means the end of civilization. You can't have a lasting civilization without plenty of pleasant vices."

"But God's the reason for everything fine and heroic. If you had a God . . ."

"My dear young friend," said Mustapha Mond, "civilization has absolutely no need for nobility or heroism. In a properly organized society like ours, nobody has any opportunities for being noble or heroic . . ." (Aldous Huxley, Brave New World, New York, Bantam Books, 1960, p. 161.)

The issues here are strikingly parallel with those at stake in the meeting between the Inviter and the Comfortable Reasoner. The first century world crucified the Inviter. The Brave New World drove the youth to suicide. Both people cannot be allowed to live.

Conclusion

The deliberately designed arguments and carefully executed documentation of the past thirty-odd pages have yielded conclusions which I consider to be relevant and decisive. For the reasons stated, I have asserted that Christianity K never collides with scientific reason and logical reason, because they operate on different levels. But Christianity K and comfortable reason operate on the same level and in precisely the same area: subjectivity. Consequently, the collision is head-on and at high speed. Thus, in answer to the original question, Is Christianity offensive to reason?, we may summarize by concluding that, for Kierkegaard, Christianity is not offensive to scientific reason and logical reason, but it is definitely and eminently offensive to comfortable reason.

In the Introduction to this section, I have already stated and explained the significance of these conclusions for the understanding of Kierkegaard's views on the Christian life and the theme of Imitation. In shortened form, it is as follows. Suppose that it could be established that the offensiveness of Christianity results from its collision with scientific reason or logical reason. This would indicate that essential concerns of Christianity center about events of past history or phrasing of creedal statements. If one affirms these events without doubt or confesses these phrases without qualification, he is assured by the ecclesiastical authorities that he possesses the proper God-relationship. At least this would be the case if it could be shown that Christianity were offensive to scientific reason and logical reason. Under such circumstances, it is clear that the locus of the Christian life is removed from the context of the concrete day-to-day, act-to-act existence of the individual Christian. In such an environment, Imitation -which designates daily life as its arena and proposes a pattern for concrete acts- is clearly out of business. Not only has it no status as a central concern of Christianity, but the very human soil which it requires for growth is not to be found within the boundaries of this kind of Christianity. The understanding of what it means to be a Christian would not include the "practice of holy living" in any form -including the Imitation of Christ.

Kierkegaard has said that Christianity is offensive to reason (Forstand). If it can be shown that, for Kierkegaard, the offended reason is scientific or logical reason, then a viable theme of Imitation is relegated to a lesser place in his thought or is excluded altogether. I have argued that this cannot be shown. Furthermore, I have argued that it is comfortable reason which is offended by Kierkegaard's understanding of Christianity. Comfortable reason concerns itself with a man's subjectivity and outward expressions of that subjectivity. This is precisely the area with which Christianity K's Imitation concerns itself. Consequently, the question of Christianity K's offense to reason does not turn out to be one which competes with, detracts from, undercuts, or excludes the cause of Imitation. On the contrary, we have seen that Christianity K's offensiveness is crucially bound up with the very fiber of Imitation itself. Thus, that which threatened Imitation has turned out finally to further convince us of the centrality of Imitation in the thought of Kierkegaard.

B. JESUS THE ATTRACTIVE PERSON

Introduction

In the preceding section, Kierkegaard has forced us to see the terror of the would-be Christian who finds himself caught between the Inviter's severe demands and his awesome judgment. In such a situation, the Inviter might better be called the Repeller. His "Come hither" message has more the impact of "Get ye hence!"[1] Yet, in full awareness of this repulsive terror, Kierkegaard spoke movingly of Jesus' attractiveness and the joy in the task of Imitation. Aside from the title, the Inviter, Kierkegaard also called Jesus The Prince of Peace,[2] The Helper,[3] The Comforter,[4] The Good Shepherd.[5] Although Kierkegaard's emphasis on Jesus' role as stern Judge could hardly be more forceful, he nevertheless felt that Jesus' unique magnetism could draw men to him. In this next section, some elements of Kierkegaard's understanding of Jesus' attractiveness will be examined.

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[1] TC 25, cf. p. 5 (XII 21, cf. the seventh unnumbered page at the front of vol. XIII. In the 1906 edition of Kierkegaard's Samlede Vaerker, twelve pages from vol. XII were mistakenly bound -unnumbered- at the front of vol. XIII. This reference is to one of those pages.)

1. Engaging Facets of Jesus and His Message

If a man pledges his ultimate loyalty to Jesus Christ and strives to pattern his life after Jesus' example, he has made a decision which puts an end to the listless wandering of uncommitment. Terrible as Jesus' demands are, they represent a welcome solidity to the man whose arrogantly self-sufficient steps have plunged him only deeper into the mire of futility. The man who vowed to pledge himself only to irrefutably self-evident principles is exhausted and sick at heart after years of fruitless searching. Realizing at last that the qualitative movement of commitment is never coerced by merely quantitative evidence, he is enabled to make the movement of faith and thereby escapes from his hopeless quest. In _Either/Or_ Kierkegaard has shown that both the esthete and the ethical man will ultimately reach the dead-end of despair, since they insist on making their own rules and then find that they cannot humanly fulfill them. Their despair can be annulled, says Kierkegaard, only when they acknowledge their failure, abandon their unattainable goals, and learn to depend on a power outside themselves. The kind of mental or spiritual release which this process brings is difficult to describe to the non-religious man, since analogies are scarce. The release which I am seeking to describe is suggested in the reports that long-term embezzlers, who have known all along that they could not always escape detection, experienced a kind of relief when they were finally apprehended. They say something like, "I am glad it is over at last. I could not have kept it up much longer." The attractiveness of commitment to Jesus lies in part in the liberating experience of release from the impossible burden of an attempt at complete self-sufficiency.

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[2] ED v. 3 135 (III 167).

[3] TC 14-15 (XII 9-10).

[4] SE 100 (XII 364).

[5] CD 275ff. (X 275ff.).

Also, the personal triumphs in the life of Jesus cannot help but spark the admiration of many. Those who are the constant prey to temptation marvel at Jesus' powers of resistance. Those whose lives are tormented by anxieties and fears are amazed by Jesus' composure. Those who have compromised away their self-respect wonder at Jesus' strength of will. Those who have sold out to shabby values are struck by Jesus' ability to rise above such entanglements. Surely here is a man worthy of the title Master. And this Master commands that we follow him.

When such a man speaks with self-possessed authority on the ultimate questions of life and death, he is certain to attract a crowd and to command their attention. The fanatic's ranting often seems unconvincing in its very compulsiveness. But the man who speaks with quiet confidence invests his message with an aura of credibility which cannot be so easily discounted. And when this man seems to possess the kind of knowledge for which men hunger, he is certain to have a ready audience. For who has not at some time wondered from whence he came and whither he is going, or whether or not there is any guiding purpose to the world's events? Unless a man has clamped the lid on his inquiring spirit, he is sure to be at least curious about answers to these questions -especially when the answers are given by someone who speaks with a compelling quality of certainty unique among men. Such a speaker, claims Kierkegaard, was Jesus. And also such is the character of Jesus and his message as contained in the New Testament. Endowed with a controlled yet blazing passion, and dealing with the ultimate questions of life and death, Jesus drew and still draws many to him.

2. Release from Anguished Striving

The first section of Kierkegaard's Christian Discourses is devoted to a discussion of what he calls "the anxieties of the heathen."[6] According to Kierkegaard, the heathen faces the world alone and unprotected, beset by worries on all sides. If he is a pauper, he worries about making ends meet. If he is rich, he worries about being robbed. Mediocrity depresses the just-average man, while lack of privacy irritates the public figure. Examples can be easily multiplied. Kierkegaard's conclusion is that the anxious heathen lives his life largely discontent with the past, struggling with the present, afraid of the future.

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[6] CD 5-93 (X 7-93).

Jesus offers to deliver man from his hectic and futile yearning for contentment. Employing variations on the themes of the "receding goal" and "the grass is always greener," Kierkegaard convincingly illustrates the chronic insatiability of the esthetic life. Through such books as Either/Or and Stages on Life's Way, Kierkegaard hopes to hold up the mirror to the esthete, showing him that as long as he draws his satisfactions from the world's pleasures he will never find lasting contentment, but will be endlessly driven on by his unquenchable thirst for the new and different. Apropos of this situation, Jesus has said, "Every one who drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water I give shall never thirst."[7] Apparently there is some ingredient in Jesus' message which saves a man from his frantic and hopeless search for fulfillment among the empty options of the world.

The world-bound man can become free through learning what Kierkegaard calls "contentment with our common humanity."[8]

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[7] John 4:14a.

[8] GS 168-198 (VIII 248-270).

As long as one's degree of contentment is measured by the world's standards, there is always room for complaint and anxiety. For instance, a man can never have complete financial security, or be entirely free from all possible dangers to his health. Such temporal considerations are called merely relative by Kierkegaard, and are contrasted with the absolute measurements of God. Many of the anxiety-provoking elements in everyday life are judged as relatively insignificant in view of God's absolute standards. From a relative standpoint, temporal success and recognition are among the highest goals. According to the absolute standard, it profits a man nothing if he gains the whole world yet loses his own soul. Using the illustration of the lilies of the field and the birds of the air which do not "toil and spin," yet are cared for by God, Kierkegaard encourages men to let the morrow be anxious for itself. The lilies and birds are the schoolmasters to teach us that trust in God can release a man from bondage to fear of the future. In moving forward to face life with Godly silence, obedience, and joy, one leaves behind the anxieties which plagued the heathen.

It need hardly be added that the anxiety-chained man is more than open to Jesus' words of liberation. Buffeted by the world's whims, goaded by insatiable desires, exhausted by the struggle -the man hanging on for dear life gladly hears the words, "Let go. Come unto me and I will give you rest." Part of Jesus' power to draw men to himself can be seen reflected in the joy and gratitude with which the anxious man accepts this invitation and thereby finds contentment.[9]

3. Answer to the Need for Forgiveness

In one of his later books, Kierkegaard included a chapter with the apparently contradictory title, "The Joy in the

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[9] There are many possible objections to Kierkegaard's handling of these ideas. I am confident that he has anticipated most of them. Let me deal with two major complaints which might arise. To the question as to whether the "released" Christian man is not in fact merely shiftless, irresponsible, and self-centered, Kierkegaard might reply in the following manner. It may be God's will that a man be shiftless, or so dominated by concern for the purity of his own soul that he removes himself from the general flow of humanity. And a man's responsibility to God might run counter to the general rules of the community, though they need not necessarily. Having thus sounded the note of "radical possibility," Kierkegaard would assert that most would-be Christians are not called by God to vex their neighbors and be a burden on the community. Rather, they are commanded to love and serve their neighbors, and to help knit the community together in the fear and admonition of the Lord.

A second general objection is that Kierkegaard's scheme merely allows a man to exchange a set of secular anxieties for those guilt-fraught anxieties peculiar to a religious orientation. It can easily be argued that any situation characterized by inevitable failure and unavoidable judgment is rich with possibilities for fear and trembling. And Kierkegaard himself admits that those who sink in the everlasting arms are not thereby released from the all-consuming earnestness of the demanding Christian task. The Christian is not allowed "to hang about dreaming of the lily, or to look wistfully after the bird." (GS 226, VIII 289. Cf. CUP 524, 532, et passim; VII 515-516, 523-524, et passim.)

But although Kierkegaard stressed the terrible demands of Christianity and emphasized the figure of Jesus the Judge, he would deny that the Christian's concern for purity plagues him like the secularist's concern for security. The reason, of course, is the grace of God. No less than the goads of God's commands did Kierkegaard stress the balm of God's forgiveness. If Kierkegaard trembled before one, he was joyous before the other. The themes of joy and thanksgiving are sounded loudly throughout Kierkegaard's Christian literature. Those who forget these themes will see only half of Kierkegaard. (Some of Kierkegaard's most direct and complete discussions of Christian joy are found in The Gospel of Suffering -GS 5-164; VIII 305-416- and Christian Discourses

Thought that in Relation to God a Man Always Suffers as Being Guilty."[10] As a basic premise, Kierkegaard proposes that all men are sinful and are aware of their sinfulness

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-CD 97-163; X 97-160- and The Lilies of the Field and the Birds of the Air -CD 347-356; XI 38-46. For an excellent treatment of the theme of thanksgiving in Kierkegaard, consult Paul S. Minear's article, "Thanksgiving as a Synthesis of the Temporal and the Eternal," in A Kierkegaard Critique, pp. 297-308). Even though it does not mitigate the demands themselves, the grace of God colors distinctively the Christian's attitude towards these demands. In the case of Christianity, the demands are voluntarily accepted and undertaken in the context of gratitude. The old and often artificial word-puzzles of the Law and Gospel problem will not be rehearsed here. And the mystery of how a Christian can glory in his shame or take heart in his failure is not an occasion for words, but only for wonder and thanksgiving.

[10] In this particular chapter, Kierkegaard weaves together at least three separate kinds of joy which he claims are all occasioned by the thought that a man is always guilty before God. Only one of these kinds of joy, that involved in the forgiveness of sins, will be discussed in the body of the text above. The other two are relegated to this footnote, since they do not bear directly on the topic at hand. Yet they are included since they could easily be construed as contributory to Jesus' attractiveness, and are certainly interesting in themselves. **(See GS 65-96; VIII 348-369.)**

Kierkegaard argues obliquely that a believer should actually be glad to be greatly concerned over his guilt. This is because by focusing on his sins, a man is not so easily distracted by the world's events which might tempt him to doubt God's goodness, which doubt would in turn lead him to despair. On the other hand, the man who is not so concerned about his sins has more time to look at the evils of the world, be led to doubt God's goodness, and thereby end in disheartened despair. Since a man's constant concern ("thought") over his guilt prevents him from falling into despair, this guilt should be considered a source of joy.

A second kind of joy which Kierkegaard deals with in this section might be called the joy of imperfection. Kierkegaard appears to argue from the principle that if a man has everything he wants, he will eventually become bored with this static and unchallenging way of life. The striving for completeness, Kierkegaard asserts, rather than the attaining of it, is what furnishes us with life's deepest sustained satisfactions. Attainment is indeed satisfying, but before long a restlessness in man's nature urges him on to some new task. Let us apply this principle of the need for a task, to the question of a man's status before God. In this case, it could be said that the need to improve one's self either consciously or unconsciously.[11] If the awareness is conscious, a man feels guilty and acknowledges his sin as the cause of his sense of impurity. If the awareness of sin is unconscious, a man merely feels uneasy, accused, condemned without knowing why he feels this way. This hypothesis, of course, is loose enough to fit over all evidence, so it cannot be verified. But Kierkegaard's thesis is made at least plausible by the vast literature documenting, for example, the need to confess, the compulsion to contribute to charities, the twisted expressions of hatred of others which are spawned out of self-hate. In any case, according to Kierkegaard, all men are sinful and are aware of it in one way or another.

Let us now see how Kierkegaard combines this idea with the notion that a man's guilt can be a source of joy to him.

(prompted by an awareness of sin) is a more satisfying state for man to be in than the static condition of perfection. Thus man should be glad that he is guilty and therefore has a task.

The "attractiveness" of Jesus is enhanced through the joy of distraction and the joy of imperfection in the following oddly logical fashion. It is Jesus who convicts men of sin. Conviction of sin leads a man into concern for his sins and a responsibility to better himself. The concern distracts a man from doubt, and the responsibility sets a new task for him. Freedom from doubt and the need to strive are sources of joy for a man. Therefore, the giver of this joy is the same as the convicter of sins: Jesus. And since men seek joy, they will find Jesus "attractive."

This discussion may appear overly-complex and unnecessarily tortuous. But Kierkegaard would remind us that the movements of the human spirit are often round-about and devious. If one desires to track the spirit to its hiding place, he must be willing to follow unusual trails.

[11] COD 86 (IV 366). GS 91-96 (VIII 366-369). SUD 162ff. (XI 143ff.).

For purposes of the discussion, we shall introduce a man called Mr. M who has an unconscious awareness of his sinfulness. That is, he feels uneasy and under judgment, but does not know why. Let us suppose that at an impressionable age, Mr. M was taught to believe that he had no sins at all, and was in fact perfect in the eyes of God. Accepting this uncritically, yet continuing to feel accused, he tried to find relief in various areas of life: in pleasure, material security, scholarship, uprightness, public acclaim. But although he was successful in these endeavors, his tormenting malaise remained with him. Kierkegaard argues that these successes could not heal Mr. M because the proposed cure does not fit the disease. As long as the diagnosis is incorrect -overlooking sin as the real cause of the malaise- the proper cure cannot be prescribed, and thus healing cannot take place.[12]

Now let us suppose that Mr. M encounters Jesus' command to "repent and be saved." He is told that if he confesses his sins and heartily repents of them, he can receive God's forgiveness and in this way be released from his torment. His reply might be, "I have tried many, many cures; and gladly would I try the confession of sins if I thought it would free me from my burden. But, unfortunately, I have no sins to confess. I am perfect in the eyes of God, and do not need anyone's forgiveness." In this way, he rejects the only Physician who can heal him.

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[12] Two of Kierkegaard's prayers contain passages which fit this situation. These prayers petition "Lord Jesus Christ" to "draw us entirely to Thyself," since there is so much in the world to "drag us back" and "keep us far away from Thee." These opposing forces are identified as "empty pursuit, trivial pleasures, unworthy cares" or "temporal joys" and "human highness" which distract us from God as we drift aimlessly "in the human swarm." (TC 151, 251; XII 141, 236. Cf. prayer in TC 157; XII 147).

But what if Mr. M were to be convinced that he was in fact a sinner? What if his previous views on his perfection were shown to be false? And how would he react if he discovered also that these festering, unrecognized, unconfessed sins were precisely the cause of his torment? Would Mr. M then be happy or unhappy? He would be unhappy to find out that he was a sinful and imperfect man. But he would be happy because now at last he knew the precise nature of his ailment and, wonder of wonders, there is a cure! This is good news indeed. His sickness is not incurable or terminal because for the disease of sin there is a Physician whose power can make men whole.

We have arrived at this stage of the discussion by an odd kind of interior logic. But if one enters the Kierkegaardian context, as we have done, the movement of the argument does carry a rather convincing ring. To enter this context, one must bear in mind that for Kierkegaard, (1) all men are sinful and aware of their guilt consciously or unconsciously, and (2) God forgives the truly repentant sinner. According to Kierkegaard, if a (sinful) man does not recognize his sin, he will continue to be plagued by it. But if a (sinful) man sees his guilt, confesses and repents of it, he can be forgiven and thereby be released from his torment.[13] Consequently, the awareness (the "thought") that one is guilty is the key step toward healing. The man who is aware of his malady gladly takes this step. Within this context we can better understand what Kierkegaard means by the unusual statement: "There is joy in the thought that in relation to God a man is always guilty."

Conclusion

The purpose of this discussion has been to show some of Kierkegaard's main ideas on the attractiveness of Jesus, the One Imitated. We have seen that many kinds of people are drawn to Jesus: those who crave an anchor for their drifting lives; those whose lives of self-seeking and self-indulgence collapse when they find they have no self; those who are torn apart by a politely predatory culture; those who cry for relief from the burden of sin. Such people can move with expectation and hope toward Jesus Christ. And from him they receive the gifts that are his alone to give: freedom to the fettered, peace to the anxious, cleansing to the stained. Those who are so blessed enter into the rigors of the Christian life of Imitation with gratitude, gladness, and confidence. Jesus is not honored and praised by all men. For only those who know they are perishing feel their need for a Savior. And only those who share his life of humiliation can glimpse and participate in his exaltation. To these the name of Jesus is above all names, drawing men to it from on high. Kierkegaard spoke like such a man.

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[13] TC 72 (XII 65).

In this passage, as in many others, Kierkegaard speaks of the consciousness of sin as "the way into Christianity," the "narrow door" by which one enters the Master's sheepfold. Cf. TCS 9, 24, 25, 27 (V 182, 192, 193, 194). AC 213 (XIV 253). Rohde 183 (IX A 414). Dru 926 (X 1 A 467).

> How then could we fail to seek Thee, the author of all promises, and the giver of all good gifts.[14]

CONCLUSION

Thus it is that the command of Imitation, terrible as it is, can be heard and obeyed with joy and thanksgiving. According to Kierkegaard, the One Imitated is not all sweetness and light, but neither is he all thunder and lightening. These two characteristics -offensiveness and attractiveness- are inextricably united in the man Jesus. If we are to receive his gifts, we must accept his commands. If we are to share in his glory, we must share in his cross. Kierkegaard's understanding of the Christian life involves the reciprocally related themes of Law and Gospel, challenge and victory, goad and balm. However, James Collins accuses Kierkegaard of a "highly selective" recounting of Jesus' life which gives a distorted overemphasis to Christ's "austerity," and the individual Christian's "combat" and "struggle."

> In the presence of Christ's gentler sayings and relations with people, Kierkegaard is uncomfortable and displays considerable ingenuity in explaining such occasions away as accomodations to Jewish piety or to the childlike esthetic factor in human nature. Kierkegaard fears lest people will mistake comprehensive balance for compromise and consolation for dispensation from taking up one's cross.[15]

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[14] TCS 1 (V 178).

[15] James Collins, The Mind of Kierkegaard, p. 238.

I have taken issue with this viewpoint. Certainly, for Kierkegaard, the figure of the Inviter is awesome. But we have seen that he is also the Prince of Peace, the Helper, the Comforter. No one would accuse Kierkegaard of offering any sort of short-cut dispensation to the offended would-be Christian. But this does not mean that his understanding of Christianity is all fire and brimstone. The discussion of Jesus' attractiveness has presented some elements of Kierkegaard's thought which clearly qualify as "gentle." And the case made for Kierkegaard's insistence on both offensiveness and attractiveness establishes his "comprehensive balance" on this issue. Kierkegaard held that the task of Imitation was unavoidable for the Christian. Those who desire comfort will shun its demands. But those who strive to follow in Christ's footsteps can claim the hope expressed in the words of St. Paul:

> Indeed I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as refuse, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own, based on law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith; that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that if possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.[16]

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[16] Philippians 3:8-11.

DIVISION III

THE PRACTICE OF IMITATION

INTRODUCTION

Having completed the first two Divisions of this dissertation, we are now prepared to begin the third and final Division. Let us briefly review the preceding material in order to set this last part in its proper perspective. The first Division dealt with the Candidate Imitator and the personal requirements which Kierkegaard considered necessary for the would-be Imitator of Christ. In order to make the initial decision of faith and to comprehend and maintain the quest of Imitation, the Candidate must possess a mature self -a self endowed with intense subjective passion, objective self-consciousness, independent will, and disciplined obedience. The second Division presented the One Imitated, Jesus Christ, who establishes the Pattern for the life of Imitation. It was noted that Kierkegaard emphasized the concrete humanity of Jesus as well as the directness and applicability of many of his recorded words. The concreteness of Jesus' life and words guards the Pattern against dehistoricizing, insures its relevance to daily life, and locates the life of Imitation in the specific existence of the individual Christian. As extended by Jesus, the invitation to the life of Imitation is seen as a strange coalescence of attraction and offense. Thus, we have before us Kierkegaard's thoughts on (1) the characteristics of the Candidate Imitator, (2) the location of the practice of Imitation, and (3) the identity of the One to be Imitated.

The purpose of this third Division is to describe, insofar as this is possible, the practice of Imitation. Given the qualified and committed Candidate who accepts Christ as Pattern for his daily life, what can be said about the actual shape of such a life? What constitutes proper motivation for Imitation? How does the Candidate relate himself to the Pattern in Imitation? Does the Imitator exist in the main stream of public life, or is he somehow separate and isolated? How does he discern the proper Christian response in a given situation? In general, what is it like to live the life of Imitation? Each of the above questions will be taken up in turn in the following discussion.

But a word of caution must be spoken here. The subject matter for this Division -the practice of Imitation- is unusual, as will be brought out in the course of the discussion. There are aspects of the life of Imitation which lie beyond the reach of words: to speak of them is to misrepresent them. Even when we wish Kierkegaard would speak, he is often silent. And to learn the reasons for his silence is to learn much about his understanding of Imitation. We shall begin soon to explore some of these areas of silence. Also, since we are dealing with life itself, albeit the life of Imitation, Kierkegaard plunges us instantly into the fluid, whirling, changing, mysterious matrix of existence where yesterday's uncertainty is today's truth and tomorrow's falsehood -where no man is the same from moment to moment, but is continually in flux through interaction with himself and his environment.

If we ask "What is the life of Imitation?" we must be prepared for the kind of answer which fits that context of life. Once again, in discovering what kind of answers fit that context, we gain insight into Kierkegaardian Imitation. Kierkegaard does not trespass onto the unverbalizable nor does he impose order on the unorderable, and I shall not violate the integrity of his literature by filling in the missing words and artificially systematizing his thought.

But I contend that the unusual nature of the practice of Imitation possesses a coherence and cogency which can be seen -even if the vision is more reflected than direct. Accordingly, we shall seek to form some idea of this practice by noting what it is not and why it is not that, and what it is like and why it is like that. There are also some more easily discussable aspects which can be properly dealt with in a more straightforward manner. Close study of the Kierkegaardian literary corpus on Imitation has led me to posit the location of various natural joints. These constitute the section headings for this Division. But it is their cohesiveness I wish to stress, not their independence from one another. The literature is of one piece and ceases to live if dismembered. Using a musical image, it can be said that Kierkegaard's writings on Imitation exhibit certain key motifs which, although not always obviously present, still exert a control over the variations and improvisations based on them. Some of these key themes are selected for discussion, but only in order to point back to the total orchestral setting. It is hoped that through these various direct, indirect, and reflected techniques some understanding of the unusual, elusive, and easily misunderstood practice of Imitation can be achieved.

A. TYPES OF IMITATION

1. Facsimile Imitation

How does the would-be Christian relate himself to Christ in Imitation? At the very outset, it must be made clear that Kierkegaard never intended what might be called facsimile Imitation. That is, Kierkegaard was not advocating a duplication of the details of Christ's life. He denied anything which might even suggest identity with Christ. "To be a Christian is certainly not to be Christ (what a mockery of God!) . . ."[1] Kierkegaard was very careful to preserve an unbridgable qualitative difference between Christ and men,[2] thereby making facsimile Imitation impossible. A number of points are involved here. To begin with, Kierkegaard sharply contrasts the normal concerns of most men with Jesus' lack of earthly anxiety over property, business, women, personal safety.[3] Also, Jesus' voluntary submission to the humiliation and outright persecution brought on by his public witness, distinguishes him from the shrinking reluctance of the multitudes of summer and sunshine Christians.[4] Furthermore, unlike the part-time and double-motivated Christian, Christ completely fulfilled the law. All this constitutes a "yawning gulf" between Jesus and any man.[5] Christians may suffer for their faith, "but suffering is not their *telos*."[6] It is only Christ who "came into the world *in order to* suffer."[7] Another aspect of Christ's uniqueness is that he is the only *guiltless* one ever to know what it means to be forsaken by God and to suffer at the hands of God.[8] Ordinary men may experience this, but they experience it as guilty men, deserving of such treatment. Other people have died, and many by crucifixion. But there is only one atonement by crucifixion, only one crucified Savior. "The crucified one is eternally and essentially different from every other man."[9] Kierkegaard left no doubt in his readers' minds that the One

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[1] TC 108 (XII 101).

[2] This, too, is Kierkegaard speaking: "Truly he is the God-man and thus eternally different from every human being, but he nevertheless was also a true human being tried in everything human" (WL" 154; IX 148). Thus, Kierkegaard can speak of Jesus' eternal difference from men without conceding one jot to the dehistoricizers and without upsetting the watch-dogs of orthodoxy. Kierkegaard never makes basic doctrinal errors. Not only was he too bright, too well-informed, and too committed to "orthodoxy," but he was stalking bigger game, and would not be so careless as to snap any doctrinal twigs in the process.

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[3] PF 45 (IV 222). Cf. TC 197 (XII 185-186), CD 55 (X 56-57).

[4] Dru 1020 (X 2 A 296). Dru 1311 (XI 1 A 115).

[5] WL (Ox) 83 (IX 120). Cf. JFY (Ox) 170 (XII 432). For Christ's fulfillment of the Law, see WL 83 (IX 100).

[6] CUP 529 (VII 520).

[7] *Ibid.*

[8] GS 87 (VIII 363).

[9] PH 139 (VIII 190). Cf. Dru 887 (X 1 A 134), WL 152 (IX 178), CUP 369 (VII 357).

Imitated was the only-begotten of the Father,[10] whose will was in eternal harmony with the Father's.[11] When we speak of Jesus we are dealing with "the fact that God lived on earth as an individual man . . ."[12] Indeed, "Christ was God."[13] The difference between ordinary men and Christ could not be more absolutely stated. By emphasizing Jesus' unique divinity, Kierkegaard bars any interpretation of Imitation as facsimile re-living of Christ's life. Not only is this humanly impossible, but it would be a satanic attempt at self-deification.

Despite such disclaimers, however, some of Kierkegaard's terminology can give the impression that he favors facsimile Imitation. For instance, he recommends that Christians undertake to resemble (_at_ _linge_) Jesus, to direct their lives along the lines of (_i_ _lighed_ _med_) Jesus' life, to shape (_at_ _danne_) themselves according to Jesus' pattern, to reduplicate (_at_ _fordoble_) his life. Such language apparently suggests that Imitation involves a kind of duplication of the events of Jesus' life, a conformity with his actions and reactions. "To be a follower means that thy life has as great a likeness to His as it is possible for a man's life to have."[14] After all, is it not one of Kierkegaard's major themes that the Christian can expect to be persecuted as was Jesus, even to the point of being actually crucified "alongside of Him"?[15] In statements like the following, Kierkegaard seems to do more than hint at some form of identity with Christ via Imitation. "A follower is or strives *to be* what he admires; . . ."[16]

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[10] TC 135 (XII 126).

[11] GS 63 (VIII 347).

[12] TC 34 (XII 29).
Kierkegaard makes this same point in an indirect and effective manner in one of his exegetical _Journals_ entries. He comments that St. Peter would not have denied a mere man. Since Peter could have understood the High Priest's victory over another human, he would have stood his ground. But he was understandably overwhelmed, comments Kierkegaard, by the temporal weakness of one with legions of angels at his beck and call. Thus, in his confusion he denied his Lord (Dru 706; VIII A 370).

[13] _Ibid_.

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[14] TC 108 (XII 101).
Also, Kierkegaard comments that "when you love your neighbor, then you resemble God" (*da ligner Du Gud*) (WL 52; IX 65).

[15] TC 171 (XII 160).

[16] TC 234 (XII 220). My italics.
However, in a *Journals* entry, Kierkegaard does mention "union with God" (*Foreningen med Gud*) as a Christian possibility (Dru 220; II A 248). If I felt that the above statements regarding Kierkegaard's prohibition of identity with Christ were imperiled by this entry, I might try to discredit it, as is so often and easily done. I will not do so. But the following is offered as an illustration of one sort of approach to the "discrediting" tactic. The very early date (1838) of this *Journals* entry places it quite outside the main stream of Kierkegaard's thought. Coming, as it does, only nine days after Kierkegaard's father's death, one can understand its inaccurate character. Furthermore, earlier in the entry Alexander Dru has translated "*gaae op i Gud*" as "be merged into God." Other renderings with fewer identity connotations are possible. For instance: "devote oneself to," "be wrapped up in" (e.g. one's work). *Forening*, which Dru translates as "union," can indicate "association" and "joint participation" which avoid the *unio mystica* aspect. Also, Kierkegaard's central theme of the single individual would seem to eliminate such trends towards merger or loss of identity (See Dru 723; VIII A 482). But I will not belabor the reader further. No doubt he is all too

But Kierkegaard employs two additional tactics which guard against facsimile Imitation. First, he places the practice of Imitation in a context which is favorable to exceptions and innovations, and does not necessitate slavish adherence to one set pattern. According to Kierkegaard, one need not scrutinize just how and under what circumstances Jesus showed compassion. Rather, one should be indiscriminately compassionate without reference to any specific precedent.[17] Also, since each man has a singular "eternal vocation expressly for him," there is little chance that all will be carpenter-prophet-martyrs.[18] Despite the Biblical command to the contrary, Kierkegaard allows that it may be the case that a man can rightfully take time to "bury his father" before following Christ.[19] Furthermore, Kierkegaard offers an interpretation whereby one need not give all his goods to the poor.[20] Imitation need not necessarily involve public witness, addresses to groups, open denunciation of ecclesiastical waywardness, persecution, and so on.

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familiar with the ways in which such historical, linguistic, and contextual disclaimers can be employed to "demonstrate" various points. By such means one could perhaps make out a case that identity with Christ and union with God are precisely the keys to Kierkegaard's thought. Such are the vagaries of one sort of Kierkegaard "scholarship."

[17] WL (H) 300 (IX 309).

[18] PH 140 (VIII 191).

[19] PH 123 (VIII 179).

[20] Ibid.

Imitation need not necessarily be like that at all. In fact, Kierkegaard asserts that one can serve God in circumstances far removed from anything experienced or referred to by Jesus -even when one is alone on a desert island, or while being buried alive in a coffin![21] Any context which includes such statements as these is hardly congenial to unqualified facsimile Imitation.

A second tactic which guards against the facsimile approach is Kierkegaard's imaginative use of flexible terminology which avoids connotations of iron-clad conformity to Jesus' life. Although Kierkegaard uses terms like "resemble" and "reduplicate," he interprets them through a variety of phrases and pictorial images, each of which is rich and subtle enough to make allowances for life's changing oddness and the uniqueness of each man. (The following catalogue of words constitutes the major terms used by Kierkegaard in his treatment of Imitation *per se*. The Danish is given here all in one sweep, so that it will not interrupt the text in later pages except when necessary.) Jesus invites (*at inbyde*) us to follow in his footsteps (*fodtrin*, *fodspor*). Christ is the way (*Vej*), and the Christian is enjoined to follow (*at følge*, *at komme efter*) him along the path of inevitable adversity (*Trængselens vej*). Thus, the follower enrolls in the school of suffering (*Lidelsernes Skole*) which places upon him the yoke of the cross-bearer (*Korsdragere*), as it did upon Jesus. The would-be Christian must obey (*at lyde*) the commands of Jesus and endeavor to make up his mind in accordance with (*at bestemme sig i*, or *i overeensstemmelse med*) the mind of Christ. One who is Christ's disciple (*Discipel*) and successor (*Efterfølger*) is one who attempts to have in him the mind of Christ.[22] Jesus is the Pattern (*Forbillede*) and his follower is the one who is contemporary with (*samtidig med*) him in his endeavor to shape (*at danne*) his own life after his Lord's. These basic themes can yield many variations. An invitation means different things to different people. Although the follower takes the same path, he may not have the same gait or make the same stops along the way. The members of a school class have varying backgrounds, gifts, skills. And so forth. By using such a variety of fecund and complex imagery, Kierkegaard is able to escape the rigid and formal code of facsimile Imitation. Kierkegaard's rich terminology seems to fit life as we know it -life with its unpredictable situations, its fluctuations, its singular people with their astoundingly inaccessable uniqueness. Kierkegaard's flexible terminology, his allowance for innovation, and his insistence on Jesus' "eternal difference" all combine to make it clear that Kierkegaardian Imitation is not facsimile Imitation.

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[21] PH 206 (VIII 234).

2. Ascetic Imitation

We set out originally to discover how the Christian relates himself to Christ in Imitation. It was concluded that Kierkegaard rejects the facsimile approach. Is it possible that he favors the traditional ascetic *Imitatio Christi*? This traditional approach recognizes Christ's "eternal difference," yet employs a man-made discipline designed for human beings, acknowledging their fallibility, but urging them toward Christ-likeness in as many respects as possible. The term *Imitatio* can have the more flexible connotations of "following" or "accompanying." But usually it is translated by the restrictive-sounding "imitation," defined as "copying," "in like manner," "after the type of," and so forth. *Imitatio Christi* has traditionally stood for a discipline of austere asceticism designed to eliminate personal whims and worldly distractions in order to conduct one firmly toward a more Christ-like life. *Imitatio* conjures up the image of the monastery with its hour-by-hour *regulae* controlling activity, speech, solitude. What is probably the best known book on this theme, *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas of Kempen (or Gerard Groote, depending on your persuasion), was written by a monk for monks.[23] Another familiar book titled *The Imitation of Christ*, usually attributed to Johannes Tauler, is tempered by the "mysticism" of the Friends of God, yet reflects the point-by-point regulatory format of the monastic manual of discipline.[24] Across the channel and several hundred years later appeared literature of a similar caste from the pen of William Law. Holder of Holy Orders in the Church of England and onetime Fellow of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, Law was no jolly vicar or urbane academician. His book titles speak for themselves: *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*, *A Practical Treatise on Christian Perfection*, to name two.[25] With his rigorous patterns of early rising, regular prayer cycles, and self-mortification with Christ as model, Law created his own cloisters in comfortable Northamptonshire. Kierkegaard's personal library contained both Thomas of Kempen's and Johannes Tauler's *Imitation*, as well as Law's *Christian Perfection*.[26] And he referred to these books with general approval in his *Journals* during a period in which the theme of *Imitatio* was stressed in his printed works.[27] But any assertion that Kierkegaard favored ascetic

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[22] GS 10 (VIII 309). CUP 528 (VII 519). Cf. GS 51 (VIII 338).

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[23] Thomas à Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*, ed. H.C. Gardiner, S.J. (Garden City, New York, Image Books, 1957). See also, Gerard Groote, *The Following of Christ*, tr. J. Malaise, S.J. (New York, America Press, 1937).

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[24] John Tauler, *The Following of Christ*, tr. J.R. Morell (London, John W. Watkins, no date given). The translations "Imitation" and "Following" are based on Tauler's original Middle High German *Nachfolgung*.

[25] William Law, *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life* (Philadelphia, L. Johnson, 1832), and *A Practical Treatise on Christian Perfection* (Portsmouth, U.S.A., Charles Morgridge, 1822).

[26] Niels Thulstrup, *Søren Kierkegaards Bibliotek*, entry numbers 272-273, 282, 611.

[27] I can find no references to the works of Law in Kierkegaard's writings. But Kierkegaard does refer to Tauler in his *Magister* thesis in 1841 (XIII 346). During the period 1847-48, he refers to Tauler in his *Journals* once in a general fashion (VIII 1 A 117) and twice in a direct reference (VIII 1 A 575. Dru 736; VIII 1 A 587). One direct reference is marked *N.B.* and deals with Tauler's book on

Imitatio would not be appreciably advanced by this circumstantial evidence. And there is almost no other evidence to support such an assertion.

On the other hand, there is massive evidence which shows that Kierkegaard deliberately sought to keep his ideas on Imitation free from the environment of the monastic retreat with its atmosphere of withdrawal, tonsure, and hair-shirt.[28] In fact, Kierkegaard wanted to free his understanding of Imitation not only from facsimile and ascetic Imitation, but also from what I shall call univocal Imitation. That is, Kierkegaard rejected anything which would impose on the Christian life a rigid set of specifiable regulae which presume to apply uniformly to all men in any situation. Kierkegaard could have used the Latin phrase Imitatio Christi. If he had done so, we might more readily suspect him of favoring one of the particular heritages just described. But he used the Danish Kristi Efterfølgelse. And Efterfølgelse is a slippery notion, imprecise in meaning,

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Imitation (Dru 736; VIII 1 A 587). The Journals of 1849 contain three direct references to Thomas' book on Imitation (X 1 A 286. X 1 A 400; Dru 913. X 2 A 282; Dru 1018). In general, these entries express approval of the aspect of thought cited, or use the citation as a springboard for further independent thought suggested by the citation but not necessitated by it or contained in it. These six Journals entries are interesting since this 1847-50 period was the time of Kierkegaard's great output of published material on the theme of Imitation.

[28] See, for example, Kierkegaard's treatment of "inwardness" and "outwardness" in CUP 359 et passim, esp. 362-363, 372 (VII 348 et passim, esp. 351-352, 360-361). Note also the discussion of grace and monastic works in FSE (Ox) 39-40 (XII 305-306). These points are developed in the following pages.

very adaptable in usage. Although its literal translation (based on its parts efter and følgelse) is "following after," Efterfølgelse is indeed very generous with its meanings, and is at home in a wide variety of contexts. Consider these various possible translations from just two uses of the word in the Danish Bible of Kierkegaard's day. The New Testament phrase "det Godes Efterfølgelse" is literally translated "imitators (or followers) of the good."[29] A recent English translation renders it "those who are zealous for what is right."[30] The passage from the Danish translation of the Old Testament Apocryphal Wisdom Literature book of Sirach "Efterfølger du det, som Ret er" literally says "comply with (or obey) that which is right."[31] Today's translators render it "Follow after righteousness."[32] Thus, beginning from Efterfølgelse, we have arrived at "zealous adherence" and "compliant obedience," as well as "imitation" and "following after." And this just scratches the surface. An authoritative Danish-Danish dictionary published four years after Kierkegaard's death carries the following alternative meanings for the infinitive at efterfølge: (1) to succeed

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[29] I Peter 3:13. Bibelen eller den hellige Skrift, ed. Helweg, Hermansen, Levinsen (Copenhagen, 1847).

[30] I Peter 3:13.

[31] Sirach 27:8. Det gamle Testamentes apokryphiske Bøger (Christiania, 1837).

[32] The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English, ed. R.H. Charles, et al (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1913), p. 406.

(vs. precede) in time, (2) to perform the same thing as the one whose place you have taken permanently, (3) to serve in someone's place temporarily, (4) to model oneself on a given example, (5) to take advice, (6) to obey a command.[33] According to these definitions, Efterfølgelse can apply to the relations which exist in a wide range of contexts. The following numbered sentences use at efterfølge in a way which corresponds to the numbered definitions above: (1) spring comes after winter, (2) the crown prince succeeds his father on the throne, (3) the reserve player temporarily replaces the dazed quarterback, (4) the impersonator sounds just like him (or, the copies resemble the original), (5) the client took his lawyer's advice, (6) the soldier carried out the orders. Do any of these relationships correspond to what Kierkegaard meant by Efterfølgelse in Kristi Efterfølgelse? If so, which ones? It is a puzzle. But Kierkegaard liked to concoct puzzles for his readers, and perhaps he selected this word precisely because of its connotative richness. Its very ambiguity safeguards it from the univocal specifications Kierkegaard sought to avoid. Its pliability makes it all the more receptive to the subtle and changing shapes wrought with it by Kierkegaard's artistry.

3. Following (Non-univocal Imitation)

But let us see if some unravelling can be accomplished without rending the garment. In order to avoid the univocal overtones of the facsimile and ascetic approaches, I prefer not to translate Efterfølgelse as "imitation." Instead of this term, which smacks of pretense and retreat, I prefer to render Efterfølgelse as "following."[34] This seems justified since it is usually the second definition preferred (in this context of following Christ) both for the Danish Efterfølgelse and the Latin Imitatio. As we shall see, the term "following" seems eminently more suitable to the non-univocal fabric of Kierkegaard's thought. Thus, Christ becomes the One Followed, and the would-be Christian is the Follower who engages in Following.[35] (This terminology will be used throughout, with a few exceptions.) Has this choice of the English word "following" narrowed the field of meanings at all? No. On the contrary, it has opened up new vistas. Consider just a few of the many distinctly different connotations "follow" has in English: sunshine follows the rain, the sailor follows the girl, the orchestra follows the maestro's baton, children "follow the leader," fans follow the World Series, troops follow their scout, the road follows the shoreline, two follows one, death follows heart failure, salmon follow their instincts. Rather than limiting the possible shades of meaning, we have introduced a veritable rainbow of choices.

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[33] Dansk Ordbog, ed. C. Molbech (Copenhagen, Gyldendal, 1859).

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[34] However, having carefully prescribed its usage, I will employ the term "Imitation" from time to time. There are places, as we shall see, where it is more appropriate. Also, it helps to relieve the monotony of using just the one word.

[35] Henceforth I will capitalize the various words based on Follow. Ordinarily I dislike this practice which writers often employ to try to get something for nothing. These terms -Follow, Follower, etc.- are not at all elevated in status because of their upper case beginnings. Capitalizing them is merely a means to keep them apart from other uses of "follow" in the text.

But since Kierkegaard was interested in the Christian use of "follow," perhaps the New Testament might provide some help in limiting the range of options and focusing on the central meaning of Following. Let us consider how the Gospel of John treats the theme of the following of Christ. In this Gospel we read that many groups and individuals followed Jesus for different reasons and leading to various end results. A great crowd followed him because they were awed by his miraculous healing powers.[36] This was partly curiosity, fading when the miracles stopped. Another crowd clamored after him when he entered Jerusalem because he aroused their hopes concerning the Messiah-King.[37] Partly religious nationalism, this fervor cooled with the crucifixion. Others took the advice of friends and, although they were uncertain of who or what Jesus was, began to follow him to learn of him. This uninformed interest led to discipleship for some.[38] Then too, Jesus himself called the uninitiated Philip to him and said, "Follow me."[39] Perhaps an irrepressible response to a charismatic person, Philip's decision led him to discipleship. Two of Jesus' disciples, Peter and Thomas, boldly pledged to follow Jesus to the death.[40] These two would-be stalwarts are remembered for their doubts and denials. Jesus said that whoever followed him would not walk in darkness, but would have the light of life.[41] And those sheep who follow the Good Shepherd benefit from his care and protection.[42] If anyone is to serve Jesus, he must follow him, and the Father will honor him for this.[43] On the basis of these three promises, the Fourth Gospel proclaims that the Follower can expect living hope, comfort, honor. At the Last Supper, Jesus said to his disciples that he was the way by which they would come to the Father.[44] Then, appearing to his disconsolate disciples by the Sea of Tiberias, the risen Lord commands Peter to "Follow me" by tending and feeding "my sheep" -and by being executed for his faith.[45] The Christian must expect to follow his Master along the way which can lead to trials, persecution, execution. What conclusions can be drawn from this brief survey of the Johannine treatment of the Following of Jesus?[46]

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[36] John 6:2ff.

[37] John 12:12ff.

[38] Andrew and another person were led to Jesus on John the Baptist's recommendation (John 1:37ff.), Simon Peter on Andrew's later recommendation (John 1:41-42), and Nathaniel on Philip's recommendation (John 1:45-51).

[39] John 1:43.

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[40] John 11:16, 14:37.

[41] John 8:2.

[42] John 10:4-27.

[43] John 12:25-26.

[44] John 14:5-6.

[45] John 21:16-19.

[46] The Gospel of John is one of the most intricate of all New Testament literature. Within the complexity of the Fourth Gospel -with its many levels of interpretation, its repeated

We have seen that the ranks of Jesus' followers are composed of all sorts of people: the curious, the zealots, the mildly interested, the dedicated, the persecuted, the comforted, the martyrs. The Johannine meaning of "follower" seems to apply to any and all men who fit somewhere along the broad continuum that includes those who merely desire signs, those who seek, those who find, and those who abide. All are followers; but how different they all are. We approached the Fourth Gospel in the hope that it would provide some more limited Christian definition of "following." Instead we have discovered even here an ever-widening spectrum of meanings.

It is exasperating! Meanings multiply and interpretations materialize almost out of thin air. Will it never end? It will not end as long as we deal with words alone, and as long as we seek a neatly packaged definition. Words are fickle. The human mind is agile. And man's life is a strange, shifting thing -here solid, there vaporous; part common, part unique; forever mysterious. I have no doubt that men do Follow Christ. But I doubt the adequacy of words to describe this intimate, elusive, kaleidoscopic, volatile, idiosyncratic relationship of Imitation. Precise definitions and univocal terminology cannot hope to specify clearly the shape of the life of Imitation.

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and developing rhythms, its widening circles of meaning, and its delicate interweaving of thought- from all this, I have held up but a few strands for reflection.

Where then can one turn for illumination? Rest assured that Kierkegaard is not done with the subject. Certainly he will not trespass with words into the unspeakable areas. But he can trace their boundaries, which is no small accomplishment. And Kierkegaard never usurps the role of divine adjudicator. His writing is a judgment on those who forget their epistemological manners and let unbridled imaginations masquerade as theological boldness. But working within these limitations, Kierkegaard has much worthwhile to say. By a series of moves -direct and indirect- Kierkegaard circumscribes the life of Following and evokes its central spirit. He uses words, but aims at larger units of life -hopes, fears, feelings, motivations, tendencies. Through the medium of his books, Kierkegaard hopes to usher his readers into the presence of the One Followed, to let them observe the Follower at his task, to enable them to sense some of the intangible aspects of Following. If he is successful, Kierkegaard gives his readers insight into a personal encounter and a complex human endeavor. That which Kierkegaard seeks to communicate is always greater than the sum of his words. One would expect this from a poet or a dramatist who gives expression to the inexpressible. Kierkegaard employs such artistry to capture the shape and spirit of the non-univocal life of Imitation.

Of course, Kierkegaard himself says it best. Something important is always lost when one attempts to put his meaning into other words, or break it down into component parts.

Most students of Kierkegaard know this. And they acknowledge it -usually at the same time they confess their embarrassment at being (ironically!) professional Kierkegaard scholars. But Kierkegaard's brilliant and sustained authorship is frequently baffling, usually indirect, and often wordy. Some of his ideas come clearer when seen in the light of other related ideas scattered about his literature. Some dark aspects of his thought remain dark unless illuminated by analysis. And some erroneous interpretations of Kierkegaard require such analysis for refutation. The rationale-justification is hereby completed. I now present several interpretive categories which are designed to help clarify Kierkegaard's understanding of the practice of Following. But this point-by-point discussion cannot reproduce the total effect of Kierkegaard's soaring prose.

B. MOTIVES FOR FOLLOWING

1. Curiosity, Merit, Mystical-Erotic

Kierkegaard has definite views on what constitute proper and improper motives for Following Christ. Some improper motives will be considered first. It is possible that an uncommitted man could read about Jesus' life and -just for the sake of experience- try to live like him. Out of curiosity or some unusual bent, such a man might wish to see how closely he could approximate Jesus' behavior.[1] But

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[1] Hayo Gerdes' understanding of Kierkegaard's term "contemporaneity" (Samtidighed in Danish, Gleichzeitigkeit in

Kierkegaard denies that this is genuine Imitation. If people "simply make Christ into the ideal and then wish to imitate him -that is to take him in vain."[2] The detached attempt to live as Jesus did does not constitute proper Imitation.

A second possible motive is voiced by Thomas of Kempen who proposed the Imitation of Christ as the means for escaping hell and shortening purgatory.[3] Within the framework of "merit," it is to one's eternal advantage to Follow Jesus. There is "no other way" to salvation.[4] Even though Thomas warns against wrong motives in Following,[5] he does not hesitate to mention the terrors of being "pricked with burning prongs of iron" and "filled with burning pitch and brimstone."[6] Thomas' understanding of Following is determined in large part by the threat of hell and the possibility of avoiding this through meritorious Imitation.[7] William Law,

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German) permits such a thing. Gerdes considers contemporaneity an ethical medium through which one can strive to emulate any historical hero. The emulator's relationship to his hero is the same in the case of Jesus as it is, for example, for Alexander the Great (Hayo Gerdes, op. cit., pp. 27-46, esp. 40-46). That this is a faulty interpretation of Kierkegaard's viewpoint is shown above. Further refutation is found in the discussion of contemporaneity in section D of this Division.

[2] Dru 925 (X 1 A 455).

[3] Thomas of Kempen, op. cit., pp. 43, 67, etc.

[4] Ibid., p. 94.

[5] Ibid., pp. 95-96.

[6] Ibid., p. 67.

[7] Thomas did endorse Jesus' statement that even "when you have done all that is commanded of you, yet . . . you

writing in the seventeenth century, couches his thoughts on Imitation in the similar language of threat and mechanically earned merit. Imitation is "necessary to salvation," and salvation is the if-then result of Imitation.[8] Does Kierkegaard fit into this category? No. He would have none of it. He did once say that "the terrors of eternity (either eternal happiness or eternal perdition)" provide the sort of seriousness which can lead one to Follow Christ.[9] But the context of this statement makes it clear that "the terrors" are more a sign of intense "seriousness" than of one's fear of brimstone. For Kierkegaard, Following is not a divinely rewardable virtue.[10] He made it absolutely clear that he completely rejected the whole debit-credit system of salvation by works.[11] There are those who claim that his emphasis on stringent Imitation dilutes or denies traditional Christian ideas on grace. It is understandable that such a misconception could persist. It is true that Kierkegaard often criticizes Luther's "effeminate coterie" for their hyper-*sola fide* viewpoint.[12] On numerous occasions he rejects

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are but unprofitable servants" (*Ibid*., p. 93). But the threat-merit framework dominates Thomas' thought. This is seen in his understanding of *Imitatio* and also in his view of the mass (*Ibid*., pp. 203, 236).

[8] *Christian Perfection*, pp. 300, 334-335, etc.

[9] Dru 925 (X 1 A 455).

[10] JFY (Ox) 213 (XII 472).

[11] FSE (Ox) 39-40ff. (XII 305-306ff.).

[12] JFY (Ox) 202 (XII 461). Cf. FSE (H) 22-23 (XII 287-288).

"worldly Lutheranism's" grace as "coddling love."[13] But for all his harsh words, Kierkegaard praised the sola gratia aspect of Luther's sola fide doctrine.[14] It was the worldly and effeminate popularizing of "cheap" grace that he objected to -the premeditated use of grace as a justification for intentional sinning.[15] Without hesitancy, Kierkegaard affirmed a "faith which saves from all sins," and proclaimed that "the opposite of sin is not virtue, but faith."[16] Man has no independently earned merit, but must rely entirely on God's grace.[17] Kierkegaard speaks of the "two victories" in the Christian life. One is the triumph over worldliness. The second is the conquest over the temptation to take self-pride in these God-given accomplishments. "After having vanquished all, a man stands only when in the moment of victory he yields the victory to God."[18] Kierkegaard might have agreed with Shakespeare that "Nothing emboldens sin so much as mercy." Certainly, Kierkegaard did all he could to dis-embolden sin. But he never resorted to works righteousness and consequently never strained the quality of divine grace. His position is unmistakably clear on this point:

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[13] WL (H) 348 (IX 356). Cf. JFY (Ox) 37 (VIII 303), Dru 1252, 1258, 1298 (X 4 A 560, X 4 A 586, XI 1 A 28), FSE (Ox) 39ff. (XII 305ff.), TC 71 (XII 64), AC 38 (XIV 53).

[14] FSE (Ox) 22-23, 39ff., 49 (XII 287-288, 305ff., 314).

[15] FSE (Ox) 39ff. (XII 305ff.).

[16] SU[illegible] 213 (XI 194).

[17] WL (S) 310 (IX 365).

[18] WL (H) 308 (IX 317).

> Christianity's requirement is: Thy life shall as strenuously as possible give expression to works -and then one thing more is required: that thou humble thyself and admit, But none the less I am saved by grace.[19]

He could not have said it more plainly.

A third possible motive for Following would be to achieve some mystic sweet communion with Jesus. Thomas of Kempen's book on Imitation is laced with talk about close fellowship with Jesus the "friend"[20] whom the blessed man can hear "speaking in his soul."[21] Furthermore, Jesus is referred to as "most loving Spouse,"[22] the "lover" who "tastes wonderfully sweet."[23] According to Thomas, one can dwell with Jesus in this state of "pleasant paradise"[24] only as long as one earns his company through Imitatio. If you stray from the narrow path, you lose your heart's companion (and also his grace!). "You may soon drive your Lord Jesus away and lose His grace if you devote yourself to outward things. And if through negligence you lose Him, what friend will you then have?"[25] Kierkegaard stressed gratefulness for

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[19] FSE (Ox) 42 (XII 308).

[20] Thomas à Kempis, The Imitation of Christ, p. 84.

[21] Ibid., p. 103.

[22] Ibid., p. 135, 75.

[23] Ibid., p. 155.

[24] Ibid., p. 85.

[25] Ibid., p. 86.

God's gift and fidelity to his commands. But he never advocated this sort of mystical-erotic relationship as a goal or even as a by-product of Following Christ. Devotion and adoration? Perhaps. Savior? Yes. Marriage and lover? Certainly not! We have already discussed Kierkegaard's ideas on the terror and repulsiveness of the Inviter.[26] This awesome figure does not encourage such familiarity between himself and his Followers. It is concluded, then, that Kierkegaard rejects uncommitted Imitation, reward-seeking Imitation, and mystical-erotic Imitation as unacceptable ways of Following Christ.

2. Gratitude, Living Hope

How does one set out properly on the path of Following Christ? Rather than a self-initiated, self-interested enterprise, Kierkegaard views the life of Imitation as a response evoked by an encounter with one's Savior. And how does one encounter the Savior? No doubt there are as many answers to this question as there are people. Part of the answer lies in what has already been discussed under the heading of "Jesus' Attractiveness."[27] Briefly, Kierkegaard contends that if a man objectively assesses his situation and needs, he will find that commitment to Jesus Christ will deliver him from his goal-less wandering, plaguing anxieties, insatiable desires, inevitable despair, and corroding

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[26] Supra pp. 143-186.

[27] Supra pp. 186-199.

(recognized or not) guilt. The sinking man plucked from such a mire does not object to the austere visage of his deliverer. And nothing less than life-long gratitude is an appropriate response to such a Savior. The parched and near-dead man, stumbling, searching hopelessly from dry well to dry well, will not forget the one who gives him "living water." To the apparently well-nourished man who seems to stand on solid ground, all this appears as incomprehensible, foolish, and perhaps a bit embarrassing. But to the saved man, no amount of constant loyalty, devotion, and obedience can ever approximate his gratitude for the unspeakable gifts of confidence, forgiveness, hope. Kierkegaard speaks movingly of Christian gratitude, and the theme of thanksgiving to God is central in his religious thought. Thus it is natural for him to assert that once a man moves toward significant belief in such a saving God, he would become a Follower out of thankfulness for "how much Christ has done for [him]."[28] It is out of this context of gratitude that one can begin properly to Follow Christ.

Having pledged himself to Follow Christ, it is possible that time and experience may strengthen the Christian's commitment and enrich his reasons for Following. Since Jesus himself has gone on before, the Follower has only his footprints to guide him. Although he faces the same sorts of temptations and trials which Jesus faced, he cannot draw courage from the physical presence of his Master. But there is a kind of presence which Kierkegaard claims is greatly encouraging to the Christian. Once a man has set out on the path, he receives increased confidence in his choice of directions. On account of his faith, the Follower may be derided, betrayed, misused, even killed. But his Gospel tells him that Jesus also was treated this way, and that he passed through this humiliation as the exalted Son of God. The Christian takes heart in this message, believing that the way of Following leads through the darkness into light, through pain into joy, through death into life. He who has faith in the persecuted yet resurrected Lord has courage in his own trials. This is the promise and hope as written in Scripture. Confidence in this proclamation draws the Follower forward on the way.

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[28] Dru 1150 (X 3 A 602). Cf. Dru 1283 (X 5 A 54).

And Kierkegaard goes further than this. He claims that whoever Follows Jesus actually possesses a living hope and a realized promise, not at some future post-death time, but during his lifetime on earth. He has not only the written words but the living Word. This is no notion of divine visitation or angelic messengers. But it entails the presence of Christ with his Followers in a way which is perhaps more convincing than a message, more believable than a messenger. Kierkegaard spoke of the possibility of Christ's living inside a man.[29] The Christian can sense the closeness, respond to the presence. Taken conversely, this is akin to St. Paul's en Christo, in which case the Follower is "in Christ." Kierkegaard referred to this Pauline theme often in his writings. The Christian Follower is not separated from his victorious Lord if Christ is in him and he in Christ. This would be a great source of comfort on the "way of adversity." In addition to this, Kierkegaard claims that the very activity of living the life of Imitation can lead one into a deeper and deeper confidence in and understanding of Christianity's proclamation. For example, he who earnestly engages in Following, discovers that some of his doubts concerning Christ's Ascension are assuaged. "Venture farther out in the direction of imitating and then assurance about the Ascension will come at once . . ."[30] It is as if the very practice of Following is itself a medium for increasing confidence and faith in one's hope and task. Once the original commitment in gratitude is made, the Follower is invited to enter a responsive, answering environment in which assurance and support are increasingly present. The overused word "motivation" does not adequately describe the qualities of such a living environment. But it is this environment which draws the Christian forward on the path of Following.

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[29] Dru 196 (II A 730).

3. Personal Environment

This discussion so far has ruled out some improper motives for Following, and has presented some of Kierkegaard's thoughts on genuine Following. In the preceding paragraph I mentioned my dissatisfaction with the word "motivation" as descriptive of that which draws the Christian forward on the path of Following. "Motivation," as it is often used, is too enclosed and formal a word, too flat and static for what I wish to convey. It is clear that Following is not a simple, straightforward activity. We have seen that it involves a personal encounter, a maturing relationship, a development of attitudes -with all the ambiguities and fluctuations that these entail. Kierkegaard speaks of levels of Following and of movements within the total process of Following. Rather than an isolatable series of unitary reasons for Following, Kierkegaard presents a living, moving, developing environment within which the complex activity of Following takes place. By way of summary, I offer this schematization of the un-schematizable. To begin with, a person in need realizes his needs. He hears the Gospel and finds therein emancipation from his anguish. Out of gratitude to his Savior, he pledges to him his loyalty and obedience. Soon he learns that what is required of him was required also of the Savior who has gone on before in triumph to prepare a place for him. As the Follower begins on the path, he is encouraged in this hope. And as he progresses further, he comes to know that his Lord is with him, lending assurance to his belief and victory to his trials. The total process of Following involves a variety of movements: arrival at self-awareness, turning to the Gospel, coming to the Savior, setting out to Follow him, progressing further on the way. Of course, no set sequential arrangement of these steps can be given, no percentage of ingredients specified. There are no necessary connections between the various parts, no guaranteed stimuli for progress, no predictable results. Based on various passages in Kierkegaard's writings, I have been able to isolate these main themes and to give them some legitimate order. But this is no formula intended for universal application. Words may work that way; people do not.

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[30] FSE (H) 82 (XII 353). Kierkegaard's italics.

Much of what I have been discussing is involved in Kierkegaard's understanding of contemporaneity (samtidighed). I did not use the word before in order to avoid hackneyed interpretations.[31] It is this contemporaneity which constitutes the context for proper Following -beginning with the first encounter with Jesus, moving toward increased confidence in him, and culminating in a deep personal relationship with him. This developing relationship to one's Savior is the soil in which the life of Following is planted, takes root, and flourishes. It is the living environment of Following. In my opinion, Kierkegaard's use of contemporaneity has much the same meaning of St. Paul's en Christo. To be "in Christ" in the Pauline sense is to be related to the humiliated and exalted Lord in faith, obedience, and joy -and to stake one's post-death existence on this same Lord. The life and death of Christ are inextricably knit together with the believer's life and death. Kierkegaard developed these same themes with precision and depth. But I cannot here present his whole complex of thoughts on *en Christo*. What I have selected for focus within this complex is the Follower's awareness of Christ's real and triumphant presence. The Christian senses that he is accompanied in his trials by one who has experienced it all before. The One Followed has known the sly perils and overt violence of life's dark corners. And he has conquered them all. Who could ask for a better companion on the way?

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[31] The main primary sources for this theme are Philosophical Fragments and Training in Christianity. Although many books on Kierkegaard in English refer to this notion, the best and most thorough single study on contemporaneity remains Per Lønning's Samtidighedens Situation (Oslo, Forlagets Land og Kirke, 1954).

When we speak of companionship and accompanying, we are again reminded of the essentially personal nature of Following and of the intangible environment within which it takes place. A systematic presentation such as the preceding cannot capture all that is involved in the personal relationship between a Follower and his Lord. Perhaps this comparison will help.

> Having landed in unfamiliar enemy territory, the solitary secret agent opens his sealed orders in private and proceeds unaccompanied on his lonely and dangerous mission. By contrast, the Christian "agent" is met by a compatriot who speaks from personal experience about the terrain, the task, and the enemy, and will accompany the Christian on the mission.

Although this illustration lacks the conviction of victory which Kierkegaard describes, it does communicate some of the drama of the life of Following, its seriousness and intensity. And it conveys the idea that the Christian feels accompanied and in the presence of personal strength beyond his own. Further detailing of this subject is curtailed by Kierkegaard's warning.

> The possibility of knowing what Christianity is without being a Christian must therefore be affirmed. It is a different question whether a man can know what it is to be a Christian, without being one, which is to be denied.[32]

It is clear that if one is a Follower of Jesus, he is "just as contemporary with His presence on earth as were those [first] contemporaries."[33] Kierkegaard has thus told us "what Christianity is," using general categories such as contemporaneity. But what does it mean to experience this contemporaneity? Is it a mystical presence? A vague awareness? A lucid insight? Is it constant, intermittent, imposed, evokable, describable, ineffable? Immediately such questions introduce the personal, environmental dimension which varies so acutely from person to person as well as within each individual at different times in his life. This personal dimension resists all univocal terminology and cannot be captured by mere words. The above questions deal with "what it means to be a Christian." Intentionally, I believe,

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[32] CUP 332 (VII 322). First italics mine, second Kierkegaard's.

[33] TC 9 (XII 1).

Kierkegaard declines to give a specific response to such questions. But he makes it clear that each of his readers can discover the answers by the only way open to them: to Follow Christ.[34]

C. LOCI OF FOLLOWING

1. Withdrawal from the Despicable World

Where does the path of Imitation lead? For Thomas of Kempen, this path led directly to a life of withdrawal from the world -a life of solitary contemplation regulated by strict discipline. The privacy of a monastic cell provides the proper setting for this way of life. And not only must one withdraw from the world to practice Imitatio, one must despise the world and its pleasures as dung.[1] You may see nothing of importance "outside your chamber that you may not see within it."[2]

> Go seldom among strangers; . . . Be not familiar with any woman . . . Desire to be familiar only with God and with his angels; have care to avoid the familiarity of man as much as you can.[3]

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[34] If this seems unnecessarily vague and unfairly evasive, it must be said that for Kierkegaard there are categories which are higher than fairness or clarity. To represent the unspeakable in words is to misrepresent it. But Kierkegaard held out the possibility to his readers of appropriating that "unspeakable" for themselves. Then they would know it. As Dryden has said: "There is a pleasure, sure,/ In being mad, which none but madmen know."

[1] Thomas à Kempis, op. cit., p. 36.

[2] Ibid., pp. 57-58.

[3] Ibid., p. 39.
These are Thomas of Kempen's words. They do not, of

The Follower is told to remove himself from the flow of corrupt society, to "subdue to world and thrust it underfoot," thereby becoming a "true lover of the Cross."[4] Thomas asks, "All the life of Christ was Cross and martyrdom; do you seek pleasure and joy?"[5] If the answer is yes, the would-be Christian has chosen the wrong path to follow. Although William Law did not renounce all of public life in such sweeping terms, he did admonish his readers to "avoid all pleasures and cares which grieve the Holy Spirit."[6] Christians must avoid that in the world which could tempt them: racy novels, compromising business situations, the bawdy theater, the comforts of one's Club, and so forth. It is far, far better to remain at home engaged in prayer and self-mortification, than to partake of the seductive pleasures of the world. In the cases of both Thomas of Kempen and William Law, the path of Imitatio led away from the despicable world.

Is such contempt for the world and withdrawal from it compatible with Kierkegaard's understanding of Imitation? Must the Follower of Christ leave the company of his fellows, renounce the common joys of life, scorn the fleshly body,

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course, accurately describe all monasteries or the principles of all Orders. Customs and theories varied. Many groups, such as the Beguines in the Middle Ages, endorsed a rather flexible and social program of holy living.

[4] Ibid., p. 52.

[5] Ibid., p. 96.

[6] William Law, Christian Perfection, p. 323.

and retire to the private cultivation of the spiritual by offering up his mind to the discipline of contemplation and his body to the rigors of mortification? Perhaps so. One cannot read far in Kierkegaard without discovering that much of his religious writings center around the theme of rigorous self-denial and stern subjugation of common human disires. The keynote is struck by Christ the Pattern who himself was "an ascetic"[7] and, furthermore, never laughed.[8] In describing the demanding rigors of Following, Kierkegaard states flatly: "Of all torments, being a Christian is the most terrible."[9] This is so partly because the Christian is called upon to "deny himself" and to "die away from the world." The Follower must renounce "the physical man's pleasure, life and gladness"[10] by "dying away from the immediate."[11] He must reject

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[7] Dru 990 (X 2 A 146).

[8] Dru 961 (X 1 A 673).

[9] Rohde 238 (XI 2 A 422).

[10] Dru 1037 (X 2 A 377).

[11] CUP 397 _et passim_, esp. pp. 412, 414, 446 (VII 385 _et passim_, esp. pp. 401, 403, 434).

Kierkegaard speaks of "dying away from immediacy" (_Afdøden fra Umiddelbarheden_) (e.g. CUP 446; VII 434) and also of "dying to immediacy" (_Døden af det Umiddelbare_) (e.g. Dru 954; X 1 A 645). When used in the context of Christian self-denial and suffering, these phrases indicate the command to trust in God rather than in oneself, and to commit oneself to absolute goals rather than the relative ends and pleasures which so often dominate a man's life.

Variations of _Umiddelbar_ occur in other Kierkegaardian contexts, notably epistemological comparisons (e.g. CUP 101-102; VII 90-92), when discussing the movements of the self e.g. CUP 250ff.; VII 240ff.), or the nature of faith (e.g. CUP 310; VII 301). These other uses of _Umiddelbar_ are clearly not intended in the context of Christian self-denial and suffering.

"the world's pleasures [which] enthrall"[12] by "dying to the joys and happiness of the world in self-denial."[13] Indeed, "love of God is hatred of the world,"[14] as well as hatred of oneself.[15] And the world and oneself, in which so much of man's natural desires are rooted, are not easy to hate. Christianity is "the direct opposite of what is to man's taste and liking, being sheer suffering, anguish, misery."[16] The effort to sustain such hatred is "the world's most terrible conflict,"[17] a fight which is "as bitter as death" itself.[18] This certainly sounds dark and forbidding, and

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[12] TC 153 (XII 143).

[13] Dru 696 (VIII A 269).

[14] LOF in GS 227 (VIII 289).

[15] AC 5 (XIV 5). Rohde 238 (XI 2 A 422).

[16] AC 226 (XIV 267).

[17] GS 227 (VIII 289).

[18] CD 180 (X 175).

In places, Kierkegaard's thought can do more than hint at a kind of masochism. He comments that "very much" personal suffering is a prerequisite to proper Christian neighbor-love, and that actual physical pain is said to enhance one's awareness of God (Dru 696, 954; VIII A 269, X 1 A 645). Furthermore, his passion for martyrdom can be seen as a trend toward self-inflicted pain or self-destruction (Dru 1336, etc.; XI 1 A 278, etc.). On occasion he expresses his own tendency toward self-torture or self-torment (*Selvplagerisk*) (Dru 747, 1287; VIII A 640, X 5 A 72), admits a certain kind of self-torture in religion in general (in Frater Taciturnus' "Epistle to the Reader," Kierkegaard devotes several pages to discussing the theme of the *heautontimorumenos* -the self-tormentor- SLW 420-428; VI 433-441), and by contrast to paganism endorses self-torture as a legitimate ingredient of Christianity (Dru 836; IX A 393).

A student with an imaginative psychological bent (like Theodor Haecker) could easily put this material together with smacks of a kind of formidable monastic discipline and rejection of the despicable world.

Kierkegaard's heavy stress on self-denial and dying to the world, interpret it all in the light of his severe religious upbringing and his physical discomfort and/or deformity, and make some dramatic conclusions. For example, the psychologizer might claim that since Kierkegaard was unable to escape from his own suffering, he made it normative and eminently desirable for all Christians. Then again, Kierkegaard may have been so desperately guilt-ridden that he sought to purify himself through sacrificial renunciation. Perhaps, perhaps. But our records indicate that St. Paul wrote about self-denial and dying to the world, and Jesus spoke this way frequently. Were all three of them unbalanced, disturbed, sick masochists? It may be impossible to say. But even if we could, would this information change the command to Follow Christ? Would it alter the shape of the possible life of Following? I think not.

Even if Kierkegaard had said no more on this subject, that would be a fitting end to such speculation. But Kierkegaard says more. He claims that Christ *did not seek out* persecution but rather sought insofar as was possible to avoid it (VIII A 271. Cited in L. Dupré, *op. cit.*, p. 151). In several places Kierkegaard asserts that, likewise, the Follower should not deliberately desire or provoke persecution (Dru 1270; X 4 A 630. GS 139; VIII 399. PH 172-173; VIII 212-213). The point is rather to be able to withstand suffering *when it does come*, exhibiting Christian patience and confessing one's Lord in the midst of it all (*Ibid.*). Also, Christian suffering is not to be equated with self-inflicted flagellation of any sort (CUP 414; VII 446). No masochist would care to be deprived of his right to initiate his own satisfying torment. In a related point, Kierkegaard states that the proper response to one's sin is not grovelling self-deprecation, but repentance and thanksgiving for grace (SUD 195; XI 173. Cf. PH 42-46, esp. 46; VIII 127-129, esp. 129). This should serve to break the self-perpetuating, masochistic cycle of sin-despair-sin-despair-sin-etc. Also, Kierkegaard argues that only joyful gratitude, not fear, is the proper motivation for Following (PH 84; VIII 155). This would rule out the moroseness of the masochist.

Even though Kierkegaard said, "How wonderfully melancholy and religion can blend together . . ." (Dru 905; X 1 A 280), he proclaimed that "Christianity is certainly not melancholy, it is, on the contrary, glad tidings" (Dru 703; VIII A 341). He also held that "Melancholy [Tungsind] is no closer to Christianity than light-mindedness [Letsind] , both are equally worldly, equally remote from Christianity, both equally in need of conversion" (TC 154; XII 144). The constant note of joy rings loudly throughout Kierkegaard's

But is this a fair characterization of Kierkegaard's understanding of the Christian life? True, Kierkegaard admonished the would-be Christian to hate the world. But what is the "world" in this case? Similar to the variety of New Testament uses of kosmos and aion, "world" carries different meanings in different contexts.[19] Kierkegaard advocated hatred of the worldly world, that enticing glitter of attractive defilement. However, God's creation -minus man's corruption- is to be affirmed, not hated. Certainly, the

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religious writings. The morbid masochist would resist this prohibition against his luxurious brooding moods. By the citation of this material, I do not claim to have proved that Kierkegaard was not some sort of masochist. But I do claim that this impressive array of material will have to be explained away by anyone who accuses Kierkegaard of proposing a masochistic-oriented understanding of the Christian life.

[19] Aion (age) occurs 128 times in the New Testament, and in a variety of contexts. For example, we read about "before the ages" (I Cor. 2:7), "the present evil age" (Gal. 1:4), and "the age to come" (Lk. 18:30). Kosmos (world) occurs 187 times in the New Testament and is equally as versatile. It occurs 79 times in the Fourth Gospel alone, in such phrases as taking away "the sins of the world" (Jn. 1:29), "the whole world has gone after [Jesus] " (Jn. 12:17), "the Savior of the world" (Jn. 14:30), and the world as "container" for books (Jn. 21:25). In order to understand what specific meanings such words convey, a careful study of the surrounding context must be made. This applies to any piece of writing, Biblical or Kierkegaardian.

The arguments here advanced and soon to be expanded (in the next section, #2) are carefully documented. The more flexible understanding of the Christian's relation to himself and the world which I will present, is found to be in harmony with Kierkegaard's specific uses of "self-denial" and "dying to the world." For additional material on this subject, see the following references: SUD 143 (XI 118); PH 103 (VIII 166); GS 56 (VIII 342); LOF in GS 227, 233 (VIII 289, 293-294); CD 80, 151f., 178-183 (X 81, 149f., 174ff.); TC 245 (XII 230); FSE (H) 89ff., 5 (XII 360ff., 303); JFY 147 (XII 410); AC 279, 275ff. (XIV 346, 344ff.); Dru 1037, 1228, 1266, 1271, 1285, 1409 (X 2 A 377, X 4 A 335, X 4 A 624, X 4 A 631, X 5 A 63, E.P. ix p. 377); Rohde 166, 187, 199, 200, 237, 238 (VIII 1 A 641, X 4 A 293, X 4 A 433, X 4 A 438, XI 2 A 421, XI 2 A 422).

Christian must deny himself. But there are many aspects of the human "self." Kierkegaard intends that selfishness and self-deification are to be purged.[20] But the God-given status of being human is in itself a cause for rejoicing, a glorious gift.[21] One must sacrifice the physical man's pleasure, but not all pleasure as such; renounce base natural desires, but not all natural desires and yearnings; die to immediacy, but not to all the bountiful joys of creation. Considered from this perspective, the sacrifices are not so totally morbid, the renunciation not so universally applicable, and the self and the world can serve to enrich and renew a man's life. Kierkegaard's tone of voice seems less formidable -lighter and more permissive than one might expect from a gaunt, cowled Abbot.

Yet, Kierkegaard does not deny that the stern rigors of asceticism have their venerable aspects.[22] Also, the matters of spiritual development and discipline were his constant concern. Nor would he preclude the possibility that someone's path of Following might lead him into a certain kind of ascetic life of disciplined withdrawal from public life.[23]

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[20] FSE (H) 90ff. (XII 361ff.).

[21] LOF in GS 169-184, esp. 176, 183, 184 (VIII 249-260, esp. 254-255, 259-260).

[22] CUP 359-375 (VII 348-364).

[23] Kierkegaard claims to have tried the ascetic life himself for a year and a half (c. 1852-53) (Dru 1294; X 5 A 146). He does not elaborate on his experience, but says he discontinued the practice because it seemed to him that asceticism was sophistry.

However, Kierkegaard denied absolutely that the world *as such* is despicable, that the pleasures of life are corrupt *in themselves*. Rather, man's attitudes toward these things are despicable and corrupt.[24] He would not deny that many a man possesses the world and participates in its pleasures in a way which dissipates his spiritual potential and affronts God. For example, a man can sink in the bliss of the upper

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Nevertheless, Kierkegaard held that nineteenth century Protestantism was all too eager to use a caricature of monasticism as justification for its eudaemonistic prudence. Kierkegaard openly praises the monastic zeal for its passionate spirit of venturing all for a cause -a passion he found lacking in his own day. However, what he did find distasteful was monasticism's misunderstanding of the proper significance of venturing all. An emphasis on the special meritoriousness of the monastic life, he felt, perverted the motives of the monks. And the stress on overt practices turned a contemplative inwardness into just another form of outwardness. The absolute goal of total service to God was reduced to a merely relative end, the performance of rituals. (See Kierkegaard's discussion of these points in CUP 359-375, esp. 359-363; VII 348-364, esp. 348-351.) Eduard Geismar comments that "it is not characteristic of Kierkegaard's thought that asceticism is the highest form of Christianity. He means, rather, that asceticism is infinitely much better than the secularized Protestantism 'especially in Denmark'" (Eduard Geismar, *Søren Kierkegaard: Livsudvikling og Forfattervirksomhed*, vol. 6, G.E.C. Gads Forlag, Copenhagen, 1928, pp. 33. Cf. *op. cit.*, pp. 33-35.)

N.B. Yet it is possible to conceive of a cloistered life which could be quite free of the threat-merit context, the ritual-inwardness inversion, and the world-despising attitude. Reverent to God's sovereign mystery and respectful of human individuality, Kierkegaard's supple mind would never rule out the possibility that such a cloistered life could provide the proper environment for someone's life of Following. At least since his treatment of Abraham in *Fear and Trembling*, Kierkegaard does not dictate behavioral absolutes. How well he knows that God could call a man to strikingly exceptional behavior, if he so willed. Thus, Kierkegaard presents what he considers the main line of approach. But he always acknowledges the divine prerogative to take a (apparently) circuitous route.

[24] WL^{s} 44 (IX 55). Cf. ED v.1 47 (III 46).

class, wallowing shamelessly in a morass of gluttonous consumption, slothful irresponsibility, and self-deifying pride. But it is not the food, leisure, or self-esteem which are "dung" in themselves. It is his gluttony, sloth, and self-deification which compose the ordure. It is entirely possible to enjoy food, leisure, and self-esteem in a way pleasing to God's sight: that is, by giving proper thanks for God's good gifts to his creatures, and by esteeming oneself fortunate to be loved by such a God. Kierkegaard affirms that God's good gifts abound and one need not retreat to the cloister in order to find them and rejoice in them.

2. Affirmative Existence in God's World

Thus, it appears that the Kierkegaardian path of Imitation can lead the Follower directly into life in the world. However, according to Kierkegaard, there are two ways to live "in the finite," i.e., in the world: either immediately, or with respect to the absolute *telos*.[25] If one lives immediately, he denies that it is God's world, and manipulates it to gratify his desires, defiling it with his grasping fingers. If life fails to yield him up what he considers his rightful due, he may despair ultimately and unendingly. Such a man lives in the finite, and he lives in it immediately. By contrast, a man can live in the finite, but live in it with respect to the absolute *telos*. Such a man embodies the proper Christian attitudes toward life in the world. When prosperous, he confesses that "the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof."[26] The same man, in times of tragedy, can affirm that "the Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."[27]

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[25] CUP 358-375 (VII 346-364).

> Let the world give him everything, it is possible that he will see fit to accept it. But he says: 'Oh, well,' and this 'Oh, well' means the absolute respect for the absolute telos. If the world takes everything from him, he suffers no doubt; but he says again: 'Oh, well' . . .[28]

For such a person, the world is good, though the attitude of covetousness is evil. He knows that one can covet his borther's wife just as easily as one can covet his brother monk's endurance in fasting. Misfortune can bring disappointment, tears, pain. But he does not forget that one can curse God in a penthouse as well as in a monastic cell. To the man who lives with respect to the absolute telos, it would make little sense to retreat to the cloister. Since man carries his temptations with him wherever he goes, he cannot escape them in a cell. And since all God's creation is good, there is no despicable world to leave behind him at the monastery gates.

Where and how does he live, then, this Kierkegaardian man of faith? Kierkegaard has introduced us to such a man. Let us follow him, unobserved, and see how he behaves.

> His tread? It is vigorous, belonging entirely to finiteness; no smartly dressed townsman who walks

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[26] Psalm 24:1.

[27] Job 1:21.

[28] CUP 368 (VII 356).

> out to Fresberg on Sunday afternoon treads the ground more firmly, he belongs entirely to the world, no Philistine more so . . . He takes delight in everything, and whenever one sees him taking part in a particular pleasure, he does it with the persistence which is the mark of the earthly man whose soul is absorbed in such things . . . He takes delight in everything he sees, in the human swarm, in the new omnibuses, in the water of the Sound; when one meets him on the Beach Road one might suppose he was a shopkeeper taking his fling, that's just the way he disports himself . . . Toward evening he walks home . . . [reflecting] that his wife has surely a special little warm dish prepared for him . . . his appetite is greater than Esau's . . . He lounges at an open window and looks out on the square on which he lives; he is interested in everything that goes on, in a rat that slips under a curb, in the children's play . . . In the evening he smokes his pipe; to look at him one would swear that it was the grocer over the way vegetating in the twilight. He lives as carefree as a ne'er-do-well . . . And yet . . . this man has made and every instant is making the movements of infinity.[29]

Is this the Christian hero, the knight of faith? How odd![30]

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[29] FT 50-51 (III 90-91).

[30] These topics are generally discussed by Kierkegaard under the categories of the "double movement" (Dobbeltbevægelse) and "repetition" (Gentagelse). Major references to the subject at hand, the double movement, are found in Fear and Trembling (FT esp. 50-51; III 90-91) and Concluding Unscientific Postscript (CUP 364ff., esp. 366-368; VII 352ff., esp. 354-356). The concept of repetition is set forward in Kierkegaard's book Repetition. Among others, it also appears in The Concept of Dread (COD 95; IV 375). Basically, repetition is a psychological concept involving the process whereby a person receives back at a higher level something which he has possessed all along. He "repeats" his ownership, but now sees his possession from a different, higher, perspective. Theologically speaking, he previously viewed it as something merely temporal, whereas he now sees it as linked to the eternal. He has not lost his old possession; he now considers it in its proper exalted status. Obviously, this principle of repetition has great possibilities for interpreting the Christian's life in the finite. But Kierkegaard used repetition mainly to describe the development of the self's view of itself. When speaking of the Christian's life in the finite, Kierkegaard used the parallel notion of the double movement

It is clear, then, that for Kierkegaard, faith is not necessarily a grim "resolve."[31] Christianity does "not demand that you withdraw from life, from an honorable calling, from a happy domestic life . . . You should not withdraw and sit brooding over your eternal accounting."[32] Fasting is not the order of the day. Since a man is not "able to live by eating only at the Lord's table,"[33] the Church should not "forbid men to eat and drink."[34] Hunger is, after all, a God-given "natural impulse."[35] Fitting under the same category of natural impulse ("which a man certainly did not give himself"[36]), man is enjoined to "love [his beloved] faithfully and tenderly."[37] The company of women, therefore, is not necessarily to be eschewed. To the Christian, "finiteness tastes . . . just as good as to the one who never knew anything higher."[38] Must one seek to cast off his humanity

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(or, as we have seen, life with respect to the absolute *telos*). For further discussion of *Gentagelse*, see the citations above, and also J. Himmelstrup's concise comments in his "Terminologisk Register" in *Søren Kierkegaard*: *Register*, ed. V. Kuhr and H.O. Lange (Copenhagen, Gyldendal, 1936), pp. 283-287.

[31] GS 33, 36 (VIII 325, 327-328).

[32] PH 197 (VIII 228).

[33] WL^{s} 39 (IX 50).

[34] WL^{s} 44 (IX 55).

[35] *Ibid*.

[36] *Ibid*. Cf. WL^{s} 117-118 (IX 139-140).

[37] WL^{s} 52 (IX 64).

[38] FT 51 (III 90).

in order to enhance his spirit?

> The individual does not cease to be a human being nor does he divest himself of the manifold composite garment of the finite in order to clothe himself in the abstract garment of the cloister.[39]

Must one leave his native environment and retreat to another place (monastery or whatever) in search of God? No. "In order to find the kingdom of God . . . you remain in the place where you are . . .: every search away from that place is already unrighteousness."[40] Thus, the Follower of Christ can live within the finite, in the pleasurable company of his fellows, in gratifying congress with his wife, drinking full of the joys of pipe, evening strolls, family, nature, food, and beverage.[41] Rather than being endemic to cells, flagellations, or even Church membership, "the religious is absolutely commensurable . . . [and] is not something which belongs to certain occasions and instants."[42] Faith is "more ductile than gold" and can fit over a variety of vocations, habits, life patterns.[43] The Follower of Jesus Christ

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[39] CUP 367 (VII 355).

[40] GS 235 (VIII 295).

The context for this quotation is not simply a Lutheresque emphasis on the dignity of all vocations. Rather, it indicates Kierkegaard's broader understanding of the whole of the Christian life in which inwardness determines the God-relationship.

[41] In 1935 there was published an explosive little book entitled Søren Kierkegaard og Pengene (Søren Kierkegaard and Money) (by F. Brandt and E. Rammel. Copenhagen, Levin and Munksgaard, 1935). It was based on a detailed study of Kierkegaard's account books and other papers pertaining to his financial affairs. Among other things it revealed that Kierkegaard spent vast sums on personal pleasures -lengthy carriage trips, food, wine, and so forth. At first glance, one might judge this to be conduct unbecoming a Follower of Christ. Or one could accuse Kierkegaard of formulating the "double movement" as a sleight-of-hand device to justify his own indulgence. Of course, Kierkegaard never boasted of his spotless life, and disclaimed any sort of personal identification with his "most Christian" pseudonym, Anti-Climacus. Canonization is not in order. But it must be remarked that on his own grounds such entertainment expenditures in themselves indicate nothing about his inner life of Following. What this indicates on other grounds is another question.

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[42] COD 126 (IV 407).

[43] COD 95 (IV 375).
It is generally accepted that in his later years Kierkegaard changed some of his ideas about the relationship between hidden inwardness (skjulte Inderlighed) and public witness as regards the Christian faith. But these "changes" can be easily misunderstood. It is true that his post-1848 writings dwell more on persecution-provoking forms of the Christian life. And there is a more severe ring to his later warnings concerning the distractions and carnality surrounding marriage and sexual intercourse. But is it true, therefore, that Kierkegaard repudiated his views on the subjective, unobservable, inward locus of faith? I think not. True, Christian faith is accompanied by Christian behavior (FSE -Ox- 42-44, etc.; XII 308-310). But Kierkegaard never claimed that one could tell a Christian by looking at him. Although the outward expression of faith is intrinsic to inward faith, Kierkegaard never identified faith with any one set of works, any one way of life, any one locale. The axiom of faith's inwardness yields the corollary that faith is commensurable and ubiquitous. The elusive element of inward subjectivity remains to the last the decisive determinant of faith's presence.

But this is not to be taken as permission to act as one pleases. According to the odd logic of Following, there are inappropriate moves that can be made. Nor is Kierkegaard's emphasis on inwardness to be taken as license whereby anyone and everyone can claim to be a Christian without bothering to Follow Christ. To be a Follower is to recognize an unusual kind of entailment whereby, given a set of circumstances, the range of options is limited by the One Followed. (These points will be discussed further in sections D and E of this Division.) However, all this does not detract from faith's inwardness. It is significant that even in Training in Christianity, where Kierkegaard begins to criticize hidden inwardness, he discusses the inward aspects of Jesus' passion (Inderlighedens Lidelse -suffering of inwardness). Also, he does nothing to deny or denegrate the inwardness of faith (Troens Inderlighed). (Cf. TC 89, 138, 209, etc.; XII 84, 128, 196, etc.) If one asserts that the absolute permissiveness of Kierkegaard's earlier views clashes with his is not led to the cloister where he withdraws from the despicable world. "Christianity is not indifferent to anything secular, on the contrary, it is solely spiritually concerned for everything."[44] In relation to the world, the movement of Following is not one of retreat and scorn, but one of advance and affirmation.

D. STYLES OF FOLLOWING

1. Regulae

Even if one grants that the Christian is drawn along the path of Following by his initial gratitude, is

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later objective restrictions, he stands the chance of making two errors. This can be avoided by remembering the following corrective points. First, the earlier "knight of faith" was not given free reign to cavort as he pleased. Second, the later strictures were not universally applicable, nor was adherance to them identified with faith. Thus, Kierkegaard objected to promiscuous inwardness and hidden inwardness, not inwardness as such.

[44] WL^{s} 117 (IX 139).

In an early sermon (1843) Kierkegaard said of the Christian that "he is not concerned about the rest of the world but only about God and about himself" (ED v.1 102: III 303). However, this statement does not contradict my point. It occurs in a context where Kierkegaard asserts that no external events can alter the commitment of the man of true faith. Thus, it means, not that the Christian is uninterested in the world or that he despised it, but rather that worldly misfortunes cannot shake his faith in God. As a matter of fact, the Christian is commanded to love "all men" (WL^{s} 51; IX 63). Christian love is not restricted to God, or to a chosen brotherhood, but is to be shed abroad freely among all men. This love is no vague, general gesture, but must be focused on a particular "individual man." Kierkegaard points out that retirement to the cloister to devote oneself to "the invisible" may be a means of evading the Christian responsibility to love "the visible" (WL^{s} 130; IX 153-154). It is obvious that this responsibility can be fulfilled only if the Christian "remains in the world of reality" and dwells within the race of particular men (WL^{s} 130, 127. Cf. WL^{s} 133, 135, et passim (IX 153-154, 149-150. Cf. IX 156, 159 et passim).

accompanied en route by a living hope, and is led directly into the everyday world -even then, does he not require some specific guidelines to keep him on the straight and narrow way? William Law thought so, and his description of the devout and holy life does not leave much to the imagination. His many detailed decrees include early rising, regular Bible reading, definite prayer cycles, and so forth. Law's prohibitions include, among others, swearing and theater attendance.[1] "The entertainment of the stage is a corrupt and sinful entertainment, contrary to the whole nature of Christian piety."[2] To make his points unmistakably clear, Law drew devastating character sketches of those whom the Christian must not emulate. On Law's pages we meet Patronus who over-loves the Church of England, Negotius and his immense business, Mundanus the man of parts, Classicus and his Greek Bible, Academius the Divinity student, Julia the novel-reading widow, Fulvius and his Club, and others. William Law addressed himself to a variety of human activities, judged whether or not they were properly within the confines of Imitatio, then made unqualified pronouncements from what in his opinion was the Christian standpoint. He did not hesitate to pronounce pro or contra from his Christian stance on the propriety of various specific kinds of behavior.

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[1] William Law, Serious Call, p. 28ff.; Christian Perfection, p. 236.

[2] William Law, Christian Perfection, p. 236.
Even today's avid advocates of the Church-in-the-world approach might have banned (or have been bored with) theater going if they had lived in Law's era (and if Law's descriptions are accurate).

> Consider therefore the play-house, and the matter of the entertainment there as it consists of love-intrigues, blasphemous passions, profane discourses, lewd descriptions, filthy jests, and all the most extravagant rant of wanton, vile, profligate persons of both sexes, heating and inflaming one another with all the wantonness of address, the immodesty of motion, and lewdness of thought, that wit can invent;. . . (William Law, Christian Perfection, p. 240).

Does Kierkegaard's notion of Following involve the precise specifications of what is allowed and what is prohibited? Johannes Tauler, who wrote on Imitatio (Nachfolgung) in the fourteenth century, insists that all who Follow Jesus must copy his property-less state. The full title of Tauler's book makes this clear: The Following of the Poor Life of Christ, or The Book of Spiritual Poverty. From Dominican Tauler, one might have expected this zealous emphasis on the cardinal principal of his still-young Mendicant Order. Yet it does appear to have a basis in Scripture. Where does Kierkegaard stand on this issue? In his case, too, one might feel justified in expecting a clear-cut judgment on this question. It is a specific situation bearing directly on one's daily life. And many aspects of Jesus' life and teachings are directly relevant to this issue. In the light of the Pattern, what is the Follower to do? Kierkegaard did say that some people might be required to give all their possessions to the poor.[3] "Some"? "Might"? Is he hedging? We read elsewhere that Kierkegaard extols the godliness of the man who actually has material possessions (albeit a meager supply) and shares them with others.[4] This is more than hedging. And Kierkegaard even goes so far as to admit the possibility that a true Christian could "take over the working power of wealth," using it for good.[5] The elasticity of Kierkegaard's position on "spiritual poverty" is in marked contrast to Tauler's rigidity. Kierkegaard warns that even if one gives away all he has and becomes property-less, this is not the end of obedience, but only the beginning.[6] Apparently more is required than conformity to the observable Jesus. Within the Kierkegaardian framework, it seems that one can be faithful over nothing, faithful over little, and faithful over much -and still be faithful in all three cases. The essence of the proper Christian relationship to money seems to lie elsewhere than in the size of one's bank balance. However, Kierkegaard's opinion does not alter the point that, for all we know, Jesus was virtually propertyless and on occasion spoke out against the evils of wealth. And does it not stand to reason that the dedicated Imitator of Christ should, therefore, also be propertyless? Apparently not, according to Kierkegaard who gives that "therefore" an odd twist. Something unusual is happening here.

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[3] PH 123 (VIII 179). Cf. AC 38-39 (XIV 53-54).

2. Life in the Presence

It seems that Kierkegaard has promised us more than he has actually given. Division one of this study described his idea of the mature person who is capable of the life of Imitation. Such a person must be self-aware, responsible, able and willing to apply the strenuous demands of Imitation to his daily life. Division two indicated Kierkegaard's emphasis on the specific, concrete nature of Jesus' deeds and words. On the basis of this, it followed that the life of Imitation has its locus in actual day-to-day life situations. Also, any such Imitation must be in harmony with the Pattern of the One Imitated, Jesus Christ. Thus we have before us Kierkegaard's thoughts on (1) the characteristics of the Candidate Imitator, (2) the location of the practice of Imitation, and (3) the identity of the One Imitated. In a sense, this information describes the form of Imitation. But what is the content of Imitation? What, specifically, is the Imitator to do? So far, Kierkegaard has been less than illuminating on this point. It is as if the producer of a movie had selected his cast, decided upon the locale, and chosen the general theme -but had not yet supplied the script.

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[4] WL (H) 203 (IX 205).

[5] PH 123 (VIII 179).

[6] GS 10 (VIII 309). FT 39 (III 80).

At times Kierkegaard appeared almost ready to honor his promise to inform us of the content of Imitation. We noted that he urged would-be Christians to resemble Jesus, to shape themselves according to his Pattern, to reduplicate his life. This sounded straightforward enough. But then Kierkegaard reminded us of Jesus' "eternal difference" from us, and warned that it is not only humanly impossible for the Imitator to duplicate the events of Jesus' life, but it is also an attempt at satanic self-deification. The straightforwardness begins to bend. Imitation, resembling, duplicating are seen as Following, accompanying, being contemporary with Jesus. Kierkegaard uses a wide variety of imagery and flexible terminology which can leave the expectant reader as puzzled as ever. The traditional approach to _Imitatio Christi_ -whether according to Thomas of Kempen's monastic model or William Law's "citizen monk"- involves established _regulae_ which prescribe and prohibit specific sorts of behavior. But we have seen that Kierkegaard rejects this, too, by allowing for exceptions and innovations. Kierkegaard may very well have been true to God's free sovereignty, man's idiosyncrasies, and the world's changing oddness. But he still leaves unanswered the question: What is the Christian to do?

Perhaps Kierkegaard cannot fulfill his promise to answer this question. Does the Pattern actually provide any specific guidance for the Follower? Or does it, in the last analysis, offer only vague generalities? Is the way of Following at all delimited? Or does it extend unbounded in all directions?

These questions will be taken up in this subsection and the next section.[7] It will be argued that Kierkegaard does indeed present a Pattern which provides specific guidance for the Follower and sets boundaries for his path of Following.

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[7] _Infra_ pp. 251-279.

But Kierkegaard presents all this in his own way. It will be shown that Kierkegaard's way is concrete, and therefore avoids the pitfall of vagueness. Also, we will see that Kierkegaard's way respects the explosive factors ingredient in God, man, and the world, and thereby does not fall into slavish, univocal, or unrealistic casuistry. The intricate workings and delicate balance of Kierkegaard's thoughts in this area attest to his sure grasp of theology, probing insight into mankind, and discerning awareness of the world. Possessed of these gifts, Kierkegaard is able to steer safely between the twin perils of the deadness of determinism on the one side or the terror of an absent God on the other, the disparagement or the exaltation of humanity as such, the shackles of casuistry or the chaos of licentiousness. These are dangerous waters indeed, and strewn with wrecks. Let us observe how Kierkegaard manages to maneuver safely through them.

There is no doubt that Kierkegaard intends for the Christian to turn exclusively to Christ as Pattern (Christus som Forbillede) for the God-given guidance along the way of Following.[8] He considers that the Incarnation serves, in part, as an informative guide to the pilgrim. The life of Christ is the God-given Pattern to which the Christian must turn for counsel relating to right living. Not only is God's revelation in Christ the measure of right belief -orthodoxy- it is also the measure of right living -what might be called orthozoe. "In order to be man's Teacher, God proposed to make himself like the individual man, so that he might understand him fully."[9] Since God is Christ and instructs us

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[8] Kierkegaard's use of Forbillede and related concepts is a fascinating study in itself. This term appears early (1843) in the Kierkegaardian literature, is developed subtly and thoroughly in numerous works, and is used freely in the final Attack literature. In 1843 Kierkegaard referred to the pattern (Forbillede) which Job left behind as a "way" (Vei -Swenson translates it more freely as a "principle of guidance") for all those who followed him (ED v.2 7; VI 9. Cf. ED v.2 12; VI 12). Concluding Unscientific Postscript (1846) contains a few open references to Christ's Pattern

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(see esp. CUP 118; VII 107) and many still "uncostumed" references to it (see esp. CUP 170, 175, 231, 234, 321; VII 158, 163, 219, 222, 311). *The Gospel of Sufferings* (1847) could not be more explicit, graphic, or detailed in its treatment of this theme (see esp. GS 4, 10, 15, 22, 23, 24, 34, 91, 95; VIII 305, 309, 313, 318, 319, 326, 366, 368). *Works of Love* (1847) has some significant entries regarding the Pattern of love as well as some Incarnational aspects of the Pattern (see esp. WL (H) 131, 247; IX 123, 247). There are more than thirty direct references (and countless indirect ones) to Christ as Pattern in *Training in Christianity* (1850) which stress Jesus' behavioral precedents, judgmental aspects, and divine-human nature (see esp. TC 182-183, 192, 195, 232-238; XII 171, 180, 183, 218-224). *Judge for Yourselves* (written in 1851-52, although not published until 1876, after Kierkegaard's death in 1855) delineates the meaning of Christ as the Pattern in a long section by that name (JFY 161-221; XII 423-480). And finally, the literature of the Attack period (1854-1855) uses this theme freely to expose Danish Christendom's compromised condition (see esp. AC 117, 159-161, 242-243; XIV 142, 192-194, 301-302).

Aside from these major references, *Forbillede* occurs elsewhere in the Kierkegaardian literature and offers some interesting subjects for study. The contrasts which Kierkegaard draws between the purity of Christ's Pattern and the fallen Pattern of mankind (*Slægtens Forbillede*) is very insightful. Then there are parallel notions which Kierkegaard uses to widen and enrich the range of meanings; for example, *maal* (target, goal), *maalestok* (measure, standard, criterion), *skikkelse* (form, shape, character). This whole area of thought, both with respect to Kierkegaard and to contemporary theological problems, would amply reward further research.

[9] PF 37 (IV 214).

through Christ's life, Christ is both Teacher and Teaching.[10] Thus, in order to discern the "standard of eternity" (evighedens maalstok), one should look no farther than the life of Christ for the embodiment of the Pattern of holy living.[11] The Law regarding man's obedience to God is explained (as well as fulfilled) in Christ for the enlightenment of all mankind.[12] Christ is the Pattern after which all Christians must seek to shape their lives.

According to Kierkegaard, we may speak of the Pattern as being comprised of three elements: Jesus' earthly life as lived, his teachings on a variety of subjects, and his role as revealer of God. These three elements were discussed in detail in Division one of this study, and are here briefly summarized.[13] The New Testament contains various accounts of how Jesus lived -what he did, how he reacted to certain situations, his responses in human relationships. In coming to understand the Pattern as guide along the way, the Christian should focus on the day-to-day events of Jesus' public life. This is best done by concentrating on all but the last portion of Jesus' life -his resurrection and exaltation. Frequently, the anticipation of this glorious finale overshadows Jesus' travail and persecution. It is all too easy to skip from Bethlehem to "Joseph's lovely garden" without traversing the road in between. Kierkegaard reminds us that Jesus walked every step of that road, and that what he did en route constitutes this first part of the Pattern. Kierkegaard makes it absolutely clear that, since we have not seen him glorified, it is only the lowly Jesus whose life we must emulate.[14] It is the thorny life of Jesus, not only his exaltation, which must be "recalled to remembrance" when formulating one's idea of Following.[15] The second element comprising the Pattern is the teaching of Jesus' commands: "Do what I tell you."[16] Jesus may not have committed adultery or paid taxes, but he made pronouncements about such matters. These two elements, Jesus' lived life and his commands, constitute the Pattern which guides those who seek to Follow in Christ's footsteps. There is also a third element in the Pattern which provides the proper context for interpreting the application of Jesus' life and commands to one's life, how to adjudicate one's conformity or lack thereof to the Pattern, and how to interpret the results of such adjudication. As was noted earlier, to know Jesus is to know the Father and to apprehend the strange divine alchemy which blends lovingkindness and wrath, Gospel and Law, attractiveness and offensiveness, promise and demand. This apprehension of Jesus' revelation of God provides the framework within which the Christian seeks to work out his life of Following based on Jesus' life and teachings.

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[10] PF 44 (IV 221).

[11] Supra Note 28, p. 21.

[12] WL^{s} 78-83 (IX 94-100).

[13] For Jesus' life, see supra pp. 100-123. For his teachings, see supra pp. 124-142. For his revelation, see supra pp. 143-199.

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[14] TC 9 (XII 1).

[15] JFY (Ox) 200 (XII 459).

[16] Luke 6:46. The full verse reads: "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not what I tell you?" This notion concerns Jesus' verbal instructions, statements. Of course, Kierkegaard considered that Jesus' life itself constituted a "teaching" (JFY -Ox- 200; XII 459).

How does one become familiar with the Pattern? Since it is the basis for Following, it is essential that the would-be Christian possess a sure grasp of the Pattern, including the three elements described above.[17] The average church member probably acquires his understanding of the person and work of Jesus Christ in a partly fortuitous, partly intentional manner. In early childhood perhaps, he heard about Jesus at his mother's knee or sang songs about him in Sunday school. And he connected this person up with such words as Son of God, Savior of the world, Friend, and so forth. As he grew older, he may have learned in a more orderly fashion about Jesus of Nazareth. Before his mind's eye materialized some picture of the sort of person Jesus might have been: for instance, his human perfection, omnipotent meekness, exalted humiliation, long-suffering forgiveness. The meaning and application of Jesus' teachings and commands became clearer as he encountered more of life. And through sermons, lectures, Bible reading, this picture of Jesus becomes embellished with theological richness concerning Jesus' significance as pre-existent, Messiah, Judge,

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[17] This rather formal "possession" of the "three-fold" Pattern is given a more experiential, non-conceptual treatment throughout the rest of this study. But the formal aspect, the more objective side, is never absent.

Redeemer. Of course, the experience may have been very different from what I have described. Who can count the ways? But most church members possess some grasp of the three-fold aspect of the Pattern: Jesus' life, teachings, and revelation.[18] In a sense, a person's idea of the Pattern is like a collage portrait -a composite picture put together from pieces of information and experience gathered consciously and unconsciously from a variety of sources over the years.

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[18] Given the great variety of family stories about Jesus, Sunday school songs, sermons, and the like, there is no doubt an equally great variety of Patterns in circulation among people. Since the knotty problem of heterodoxy and orthodoxy has not yet been untied, I will not attempt to solve the related question of ortho- and hetero- Patterns. Who can harmonize the cacophony of disagreeing codices, texts, translators, exegetes, theologians? But most interested persons operate with a working harmony rather than suspend all judgments and commitments. This is most likely what Kierkegaard did. However, he held to his judgments regarding the Pattern with a tenacity and outspokenness that suggest more than a temporary, working position. He was willing to make his idea of the Pattern normative for all men -not because it was his, but because he believed it corresponded to the venerable and authoritative Scripture and interpretations. Whether he was correct in his understanding of the Pattern is a separate question, worthy of further research, insofar as this is possible. But be that as it may, Kierkegaard intends to draw the Pattern by relying on Scripture as the source. His principles of selection and canons of judgment are never made entirely explicit. But I do not doubt that he could have done so. It is clear that his Christus Forbillede is carefully, deliberately, consistently presented in his mature religious writings. On the basis of it, Kierkegaard is able to make judgments concerning what does and what does not conform to it. For instance, the Pattern excludes "coddling love," official Christendom, works righteousness, and so forth. How Kierkegaard arrived at the Pattern may be impossible to say. (Supra note 29, pp. 44-45; 47f.; note 85, pp. 86-87.) Was it determined by his strange upbringing, his broken engagement, his supposed hunchback? Was it a product of careful but fallible study? Or did it result from a nearly-miraculous synthesis of the Biblecal literature? Suffice it to say at this point that Kierkegaard employed some method to lay hold of the Pattern which he himself believed to be true to Scripture and authoritative tradition. When I speak of the Pattern and the Follower's Pattern, I will be referring to the Pattern which Kierkegaard presented in his writings.

And how does one possess the Pattern? It could be possessed as one retains any descriptive material, holding it neutrally in reserve to refer to should the need arise. Or perhaps one could think of Jesus as of a well-remembered friend. Although your thoughts of him do not fade, he is dead, and they remain but memories. In another sense, this mental picture of Jesus can come alive for a person, so that the neutral descriptive material is quickened, the memory is vivified, and the Pattern becomes a living presence in one's life. This is the situation of the Follower. For him the descriptive material and cherished memories are transformed by the living presence. The figure of Jesus so often referred to in churches and so amply chronicled in books becomes real to the Follower -present to him daily as an influence on his every thought and deed. The Christian feels truly contemporary with his Master -a disciple at first hand- and endeavors to live as he would have him live.

Thus, one possesses the Pattern by participating in what I shall call "life in the presence." This notion of life in the presence incorporates what has been previously said about that aspect of contemporaneity wherein a Christian feels accompanied on the way of Following.[19] This constitutes life in the presence of Encouragement. Also relevant is all that has been said before about the inescapable and awesome figure of the Inviter. This constitutes life in the presence of Judgment.[20] These two presences can be discussed in such general terms as judgment and encouragement. But each man who encounters these presences feels that they impinge directly, inescapably, personally on his own peculiar foibles and needs. Each person's uniqueness determines why and how he is judged, and in what situations and in what way he requires encouragement. This will vary from person to person, and within each person at different moments in his life. Judgment and encouragement are generally present, but their particular form of impingement on a man is determined by the idiosyncrasies of that individual's life.

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[19] Supra pp. 226-234.

We have now to do with life in the presence of Guidance, rather than Judgment and Encouragement. The same elements of impingement, present-ness, and direct relation to one's particular life are characteristic of Guidance also.[21] But

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[20] Supra p. 178ff.

[21] Although I shall be here focusing on the presence of Guidance, no essential distinction can be made, since the same Person (perhaps substantia would be better) is present in Judgment and Encouragement, also. I have suggested that according to Kierkegaard Christ is present to the Follower in three ways: as Judge, Comforter, Guide. This is no attempt to construct a notion of Kierkegaardian Trinitarian presence. But there is a kind of Trinitarian balance here. The Christian is not like the field mouse who lives in petrifying awareness of the forever circling hawk; there is the Comforter. Nor is the Christian like the playpenned child whose mother, although in another room, croons him into idle security with her singing; there is the Judge. Three-in-one would not be an inappropriate way to designate the three aspects of the presence.

The two illustrations above point up the sort of absent presentness or invisible presence of which I speak. The mouse may not actually see the circling hawk, but that is no license the presence of Guidance assists the Christian in adjudicating decisions and actions in life, rather than judging him or encouraging him in times of trial. Let us examine how this might work out in actual practice.

Not only does the Christian seek to Follow Jesus, but he considers that Jesus follows him, observing, measuring, and guiding him as an ever present model and pattern.[22] Kierkegaard speaks generally of how the living remembrance of Jesus can shape a person's life.

> Therefore if Christianity requires Christians to forget something i.e. [the worldly] . . . it also recommends the means: to remember . . . the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, in case thou art aware that the world's pleasures enthrall thee and thou art fain to forget, in case thou are aware that earthly anxieties distress thee so that thou art fain to forget, in case thou art aware that the bustle of life carries thee away as the current carries the swimmer, and thou art fain to forget, in case the dread of temptation overpowers thee and thou art heartily fain to forget -then remember Him, the Lord Jesus Christ, and it will succeed.[23]

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for incaution. The mother is out of the room, but her singing insures her caring nearness. However, the man Jesus is dead. And to talk of his living presence, as I have done, smacks of mystical fellowship or communion with the dead. I see no way around this connotation. Kierkegaard himself talks this way (PH 91, 198; VIII 159, 229). And the third "person" of the orthodox versions of the Trinity appears to be designed to attest to this kind of relationship. But the spiritual presence of which Kierkegaard speaks is not at home in remote English country houses on stormy nights. Nor is Kierkegaard invoking the atmosphere of a seance. This spirit does not rattle shutters, cannot be conjured up or dispersed at will, nor does it lift tables and rattle crockery. There is a presence. And it is unusual. But one reads about it in the Bible, not in Turn of the Screw or Bell, Book and Candle.

[22] CD 280 (X 279).

[23] TC 152-153 (XII 142-143).

As I have already indicated, it is a highly personal relationship which exists between one's guiding Pattern and one's daily life. The following three illustrations **show how the** Christian's relationship to the Pattern might effect his life in specific instances. When a man forgets his Lord, and is engaging in worldly pursuits, he may suddenly recall the one who died for him. The living memory of the other-worldly Christ is a "prick in [his] soul,"[24] and leads the wanderer back to the narrow way, ashamed.[25] A man indulging in self-righteous indignation over the "mote in his brother's eye" is silenced when he recalls Jesus' words which instantly remind him of the "beam" in his own eye. The presence of Jesus guides him away from error and into an attitude of repentance. Thus, Kierkegaard claims that this Jesus can be present in a way which makes a genuine difference in the life of the Christian. The Christian conscience within a man speaks: "Suppose that he visited you and that you were before him, before his piercing gaze . . ."[26] Could you then continue as you are now? This is life in the presence of Guidance. The despairing man, persecuted for his faith, takes heart that in Christ God gave assurance that he is God-with-us, even in persecution, and perhaps supremely there.

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[24] TC 236 (XII 221). Cf. CD 283 (X 285).

[25] PH 91 (VIII 159).
Elsewhere Kierkegaard remarks that shame before God saves one from becoming a "slave to men" (PH 89; VIII 157-158).

[26] PH 198 (VIII 228). Cf. WL^{s} 298 (IX 350). For a reference to the "mote and beam" theme, see WL 308^{s} (IX 362).

These illustrations show how the greedy man is checked by the self-giving Christ, the proud man is censured by Jesus' relevant words, and the hopeless man is renewed through the promise of succor and victory. Thus we have seen how the three aspects of the Pattern -Jesus' life, teachings, revelation- can influence a man's life.[27]

This living framework of guidance for the Christian life, in contrast to the more inert regulae approach, has several decisive advantages from Kierkegaard's standpoint. First, the figure of Abraham looms up continually before Kierkegaard as a reminder of God's free sovereignty to command his servants to disobey the religious or other conventions of the day as well as to set aside some commandments long considered divinely authoritative. This is the radical Abrahamic note which forces Kierkegaard to interpret the life of Following as always open to God's in-breaking prerogative. Any enclosed system of Following would not exhibit the proper reverence for Almighty God. Second, this Following approach takes adequate account of the shifting oddness of the world. Kierkegaard remarks that the mature thinker reaches the "critical moment" after which he comes "to understand more and more that there is something which cannot be understood" about life.[28] In life there is always the unexpected, the novel, the unusual juxtaposition of those things which ordinarily do not meet. Only that which allows for innovation and exception can function under such unpredictable conditions. Time moves on. And the practice of Following must be given fresh interpretation not only from generation to generation or decade to decade, but from moment to moment. Who is my neighbor? Who is my enemy? How can I best love them for Christ's sake? In a fast changing world, any specific pronouncement on such matters needs amendment almost immediately. Then, in the case of significant face-to-face encounters, the spoken and unspoken meanings flicker and crackle between man and man. The once-only, spot judgments which must be made in these encounters could never be derived from a set of rules alone. No regulae could cover all the myriad possibilities and combinations of possibilities which relate to policy making or personal encounters. And any attempt to do so would constitute an inadequate and therefore inaccurate representation of the world. Something much more adaptive and flexible is required. If the guidelines for obedience are not exactly specified, this does not detract from the absoluteness of the command to obedience. But it does do justice to the fact of life's uneven edges and unpredictable complexity.

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[27] More extended and analyzed illustrative material is found below. Infra pp. 270-279.

[28] Dru 962 (X 1 A 679).

A third advantage is that the practice of Following can open up the rich potential of the human spirit. Even though Kierkegaard called Jesus Christ the way (Veien) and the Holy Scripture the guide (Veiviseren)[29], he did not consider the

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[29] VIII 1 A 50. Cf. FSE (Ox) 78ff. (XII 342ff.).

Bible as a casuistical handbook. The Christian does not follow a set of rules, claims Kierkegaard; he Follows a person. This personal element provides Kierkegaard with an explosive ingredient in his understanding of Following. In following a set of rules, a person possesses an explicit listing of prescribed behavior and sets out to adhere to it to the letter. He can refer directly to the list, check off the duties when completed, and tally his score at the end of each day. Did you rise early today? Yes. Did you say all the proper prayers today? Yes. Did you attend the theater today? No. Did you swear today? No. And so on down the list. This relationship between the follower and the rules followed is of a quantitative mechanical nature. The situation is vastly different when one Follows a person -especially Jesus Christ. This is not life "by the rules," but "life in the presence." In this case, guidance on the way is derived from a relationship which partakes of all the vague ambiguities and enriching dimensions of a personal encounter. It taps the rich depths of man in a way no _regulae_ ever could. Checking off requirements on a tally sheet cannot be compared with the joy of obeying one's gracious Lord. The heart-felt devotion to the Master's way of life yields a fellowship incomprehensible to those who know only the manual of discipline. One can note objectively his degree of deviation from the normative set of rules; but one feels shame in relation to a person. One may be concerned about his failure to score above the median; but repentance entails a more personal involvement. Regulae stifle such personal dimensions as joy, devotion, shame, and repentance -responses which summon forth some of the best that is in a person.

Thus, the Follower does not possess a casuistical guide book; he lives in the presence of the Guide. If specific instructions are not always forthcoming, the Follower rejoices that his Master has given him rein to work freely in a host of new situations with their variant nuances. If the guidance is not obvious, it nonetheless repays the Follower a thousandfold in the richness of spirit which it cultivates. The Christian life, as Kierkegaard says, is a "discriminating art."[30] It cannot be taught from books or produced by slavish copying. The essence of art is individual creativity within bounds of artistic discipline. Kierkegaard's notion of life in the presence avoids mechanical, stilted mimicry, and encourages freedom of expression, yet creates an aura of limiting and guiding restraint.

Conclusion

There is an intensely personal, yet intangible, elusive relationship which exists between the saved man and his Savior. Out of his gratitude, the Christian pledges his devotion and loyalty to God.[31] Such a movement of thanksgiving has an undefinable shape -the very opposite of the clear outlines of a legalistic system of behavior. The Christian seeks to express his gratitude by the exercise of some undefinable Christian conscience, not by adherence to regulae.[32] In any given situation the Christian has recourse to the inner core of his faith, basing his responses on what he finds there. Such things are not specifiable in advance for all men in all manner of circumstances. There is an outpouring of obedience to Christ, but the direction, rate, and quantity of the flow cannot be read off some chart. Willingness to suffer all things for God may well be a requirement of the Follower. But what things are suffered "for God," and what constitutes ungodly suffering? Humility may be the mark of the Christian. But what sort of humility? Private or public? Perpetual or occasional? Disabling or activating? The Follower of Christ is charged with some broad precepts, but he is not given a detailed roadmap or a cross-indexed casuistical manual.

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[30] TC 123 (XII 116).

[31] PH 121ff. (VIII 178ff.).

The impatient reader who insists on receiving more specific details on life in the presence has perhaps forgotten Kierkegaard's point. We have noted that for Kierkegaard no general description is possible for such a uniquely personal and shifting relationship. He does not hesitate to suggest that the curious can seek out the presence where it may be found; that is, on the way of Following. Objective knowledge about such a relationship is not appropriate here, since we are dealing with subjectivity which has its locus in experience, not idea. This point was made earlier in the contrast between "What Christianity is" and "What it means to be a Christian."[33] Furthermore, it was pointed out that formal detailing of Following would be untrue to God's free sovereignty, the world's changing oddness, and man's idiosyncracies.

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[32] WL (H) 136ff., 349, etc. (IX 130ff., 357, etc.).

However, this does not mean that the Christian is left without any guidance whatsoever. I have mentioned that Christ's Pattern provides a living context for decision, limits the possible options, and renders some responses inappropriate. The next section (E) is devoted to an elaboration of this point with more illustrative and applied analytic material than is included in this section. At present, the point I am making is that Kierkegaard stipulated that the Christian life is not describable in advance by reference to a set of universally applicable *regulae* governing reward, location, and content for Following. But it must not be forgotten that there is a Pattern which sets boundaries to the way of Following. Yet each individual Christian must determine his own gait, speed, and style of movement within the limits of the way -working out his own responses incident by incident, drawing counsel not from static words, but from the living presence of Christ the Pattern.

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[33] *Supra* pp. xv-xviii, 233-234.

E. SOME INDIVIDUAL MOVEMENTS WITHIN THE LIMITS OF THE WAY OF FOLLOWING

This section presents some extended illustrations and applied analyses of them which show the guiding aspect of life in the presence of the Pattern. But before beginning, two points must be re-emphasized. I have made these points before, and will not dwell on them here. But if they are forgotten, this illustrative material can be dangerously misconstrued. First, the Followers here discussed are presented as specific people deciding upon and undertaking courses of action which they consider to be binding upon them as Followers of Christ in their particular circumstances. Their actions may or may not be appropriate for any other person in similar circumstances, and must not be taken as universally imperative or archetypal. This is so because of Kierkegaard's insistence upon the free sovereignty of God and the idiosyncratic nature of the individual. Second, my prose cannot even indicate, much less capture, the elusive and deeply personal character of what the Follower experiences in reaching his decisions and executing them. What is here presented is a series of stylized accounts for the purpose of clarification and illustration. I wish to show how a person might encounter the Pattern of Christ as a decisive guide and determinant in the everyday concrete events of his life. With this said, let us proceed.

It is assumed at the outset that the Follower has done his best to ascertain the three-fold shape of Jesus' Pattern.

He has learned a great deal about Jesus' life and teachings. And from this material he has learned about God. Through it all he has come to know himself better, and to develop a sensitivity to much that is required of him on the way of Following. Certainly he has a great deal to learn and experience. But some guidelines have become clear to him, and he has been able to put them into words.[1] Here are two of

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[1] In the following illustrative material, we will be dealing with Followers who can formulate their principles of guidance based on the Pattern. No such formulations can incorporate all that the Follower intends by his formulation. The context in which he learned the words and became committed to them gives them a personal richness which the groupings of letters cannot convey to others. But the principles remain -quite accurately meaningful as phrased, and preferable to principles phrased differently. And another person can become related to these principles in a way similar to the Follower; that is, by becoming a Follower, too.

But of course it is possible that ascertainment of Jesus' Pattern and sensitivity to the requirements of Following can be acquired in various unconscious and unchartable ways. A person might practice Following, yet not be able to put into words just what he does or why he does it. To some people, this is preferable, since it escapes the unnatural "looking-over-one's-own-shoulder" approach, with its attendant dangers of false motivation and pride. Luther, for one, was concerned with this problem. Not for a minute would I disparage such natural, spontaneous, unreflective Following. Nor would I assert that all aspects of Following are verbalizable. But I will assert that the "natural" or spontaneous Follower is all too rare. For this reason it is important to state clearly the verbalizable aspects of Following so that people can at least understand their obligations.

After the initial and necessary bows to complexity and the ineffable, there remains much that can be said. And it is here that Kierkegaard offers us plentiful concrete guidance on the way of Following. He was convinced that, most often, the demands of Christian obedience run directly counter to the natural flow of behavior. If one does not have the commands clearly in mind, it is all too easy to shirk his responsibility. Unless the obligation is firmly acknowledged, there is a tendency to procrastinate or equivocate. This is especially true of "hard sayings" which contradict self-interest most acutely. Man likes his leisure; whereas many Christian tasks are laborious and require continual self-reminding and self-supervision. Without the spur these principles of guidance.

(1) The Christian is unconditionally commanded to Follow Christ, is assured that his efforts can be significant, and is reminded that the measure of obedience effects his God-relationship.

(2) No matter what the Christian does by way of Following Christ, it is tainted and inadequate, and he is saved by grace alone.

Suppose that a Follower were to take the first principle of unconditional obedience to heart. He becomes very active and successful in part-time social work among low income families. His reputation grows and he is cited for his dedicated Christian service and true discipleship. In relation to the first guiding principle of obedience, would he not be justified in considering himself a worthy servant of the Lord, one whose work on earth is certain to be amply rewarded when the time comes? Could he not rest secure in the knowledge of his hard-earned righteousness? But the Follower knows all too well the truth of the second principle: "No matter what the Christian does by way of Following Christ, it is tainted

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of plainly worded guidance, the lapse into laxity occurs sooner and more easily. (Even if broad in scope, such plain words can impinge directly when personally, as has been mentioned before and will be illustrated shortly.) The fact that someone holds a command "in mind" does not, of course, insure his obedience to it. But having it in mind is usually a necessary first step toward the realization of what is required, and that it is required of me. Otherwise, sheer lack of information (or the self-deceiving pretense of such lack) concerning the Pattern can be the occasion for clear-conscienced disobedience. Jesus did not hesitate to teach. And Christians should continue to learn from the guidance present in the Pattern.

and inadequate, and he is saved by grace alone." It is this principle which never lets him forget his darker side. He knows how much more freely he indulges himself in the abundant comforts of his own home after a day of service among the poor. And what was the nature of that expansive feeling he experienced when humbly accepting his award at the banquet? He knows he has labored long and hard, but the Pattern constantly uncovers elements of selfishness, false pride, sham. He is an obedient servant, but also a repentant one -always spurred on to service, yet forever corrected by the presence of Him who alone is worthy and righteous, who alone saves.

Another Follower takes with deadly seriousness the second principle concerning the inadequacy and tainted nature of whatever man does. For years he has tried every means at his disposal to rehabilitate his habitually promiscuous wife. He has felt it his Christian duty to stand by her. But his every attempt to help has ended in failure. And the thought haunts him that perhaps he wants her reformed only to remove the odium from his name. True to God's word, his actions have been inadequate and tainted. Might he not conclude, therefore, that his usefulness in that situation is ended? Would it not be reasonable to assume that his inadequacy released him from any further obligation to the woman? Who could blame him if he left her? It seems the natural thing to do. Tempted as he is by such thoughts, this Follower knows he must stay. He cannot forget the first principle of guidance and feels that the unconditional aspect of God's law applies to his obligation to his wife. Inadequate and double-motived as he is, he knows that he must set out again and again on the way which to him is the Following of Christ.[2]

An analysis of these two illustrations shows that in both cases, the Followers set out to obey one guiding principle which seemed appropriate to their situations. When they were tempted to misuse the one principle, they found themselves corrected by another related principle. The first Follower who began with the command of works, might have fallen into self-righteousness, had he not been corrected by the principle of judgmental grace. The second Follower, who began with the proclamation of judgmental grace, might have deserted his obligation had he not been corrected by the command of works. In summary we can say that the command of works prohibits "cheap" grace, and the gift of grace rules out self-righteousness. These Pattern-derived principles are presented by Kierkegaard as guidelines for Imitation, boundaries on the way of Following. There is room for movement and innovation within these boundaries, but they do constitute definite limits to the practice of Following.

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[2] The following passage, although originally intended as background material in a book on church architecture, provides a striking illustration of this same point.

> Set atop a wild and windswept foothill of the Vosges Mountains of France, the Chapel of Notre Dame du Haut -Our Lady of the Height- is capped by clouds, and itself caps the low-lying vistas that surround it . . . This Haut Lieu, high Place, is an observation post in the Belfort Gap, the key invasion route through France, and chapels built upon the height have time and time again been destroyed by war -the last chapel meeting its traditional fate in 1945, during the closing year of World War II.
>
> It was inevitable that Notre Dame du Haut should be built again . . . (Albert Christ-Janer and Mary Mix Foley, Modern Church Architecture, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1962, p. 103).

As war's inexorable destruction is met with new construction, so must man's failures be surpassed with renewed hope and endeavor.

Here is another illustration of how a pair of principles derived from the Pattern can have a direct bearing on the conduct of one's life. The guiding principles in this case are:

(1) To Follow Christ is to walk the way of adversity, bearing one's cross of self-denial and hatred of the world.

(2) All of creation is good and intended for man's joy, so that he might praise his Creator for such good gifts.

If the first principle is allowed to dominate, the Christian life can become dark, forbidding, morbid. This approach must be tempered by the second principle of joy. However, if this second principle dominates, the Follower might feel justified in drinking long and deep of various satisfactions, leaning his head back to rest on the lap of creation, wearing life like a loose robe. This orientation, in turn, must be corrected by the first principle: Gird up your loins! The mistake in the first instance was to identify all of Christianity with moroseness. The second error was to take the gift and deny the accompanying obligation. The principle of suffering will never lead to morbidity if tempered with joy. And the principle of joy will never lead to euphoria if tempered with suffering. Thus we see that Kierkegaard proposes specific boundaries or edges to the path of Following. To trespass these is to fall into error. Yet the boundaries are sufficiently far apart to allow for the exercise of independent and idiosyncratic movement which nonetheless is still on the way of Following. These pairs of principles provide the Christian with guidance not dictation, confinement not shackling, a harness not a choke rein, limits not legalism.

Kierkegaard himself did not speak of boundary lines or guiding principles, but it is a convenient way to think of how his understanding of the Pattern effects the daily life of the Follower. Within the Kierkegaardian matrix can be found many pairs of guiding principles which serve as outer limits for thought and activity, yet allow some leeway within these limits. The most central principles of works and grace, and suffering and joy have just been discussed. These bring to mind the related themes of self-denial and self-affirmation, self-emptying and self-fulfillment -all major emphases in his thoughts on Following. In the earlier discussion of belief, we hit upon the juxtaposition of faith and doubt, wherein faith is never without risk, and doubt always threatens but never conquers. Also, in the section on faith we noted the Kierkegaardian blending of God's determination and man's apprehension, which gave God the glory but did not deny man's willing response. Furthermore, it was pointed out that, for Kierkegaard, Jesus is both offensive and attractive, Judge and Savior, goad and Comforter. If one is too far from the Savior, he is invited closer; when he comes too close, he is repelled. When the life of Following was discussed, we encountered both the Pattern and invention, rule and exception. Improvising is allowed, but never in violation of the established key and meter of the basic theme (unless the composer himself so decrees it). Steadfastness must allow for becoming. Patience must not turn into complacency, neither fervor into impetuosity, nor courage into masochism. These various pairs of guiding principles, which have already been dealt with in this study, constitute the central cluster of Pattern-derived counsel in Kierkegaard's understanding of the life of Following.[3]

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[3] This pairing of reciprocally qualifying ideas is found also in the Bible. For example: "Be wise as serpents and innocent as doves" (Mt. 10:16), "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for God is at work in you (Philipp. 2:12-13). The interplay between "in the world" and "of the world" in the Fourth Gospel demonstrates this approach-avoidance orientation. (Cf. 2 Cor. 10:3.) Also, the way in which St. Paul permits yet restricts the speaking in tongues in First Corinthians illustrates the sort of context-weaving within which something is allowed, yet allowed in a certain way only (see esp. I Cor. 12-14).

Listed below are some pairs of themes which appear in Kierkegaard's writings. Some have been mentioned already. Most are of Biblical origin, as Kierkegaard acknowledges. He uses many more than are listed here: threat and invitation; bind and release; obligation and freedom; offend and attract; steadfast and becoming; rest and the race; chosen and choosing; inwardness and externality; question and answer; doubt and faith; in the world and above the world; time and eternity; withdraw and advance; dead to the world and alive to the world; foolishness to the world and wisdom to

We have noted how these principles can operate to guide the concrete conduct of a Christian. They are clear and precise and function well to delimit the path of Following, showing plainly when one strays from the path. Although the principles allow some freedom of movement within the area they circumscribe, the principles themselves are not elastic or vaporous. They are unyielding and solid. If a man is saved by grace alone, then, clearly, his own efforts do not save him. If a man retreats from an unconditional duty, he is under obligation to try again. But the one who sets out on the path of Following is not faced with the situation of the man who must cross a stream by stepping on small stones spaced several feet apart. Because of the scarcity of stones, he can follow only one route. And because of the size of the stones, he must be careful to place each foot just so. Rather, the path of Following which Kierkegaard lays out is wide enough to allow for the freedom of God, the complexity of life, and the uniqueness of men. To restrict the path more than he has would be to deny one of these three things. This Kierkegaard could not do -out of reverence to God and in honesty to his experience of life and

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God; humiliation and exaltation; loss and gain; death and life; danger and protection; rule and exception; Pattern and invention; patience and impetuosity; and so on. For the most part, these pairs are clustered around several key themes (those cited in the text above), are carefully though creatively defined, skillfully and consistently used. Their inter-relatedness indicates the highly self-conscious and intricate construction of Kierkegaard's writings.

humanity. Because of God's freedom, Kierkegaard had to allow for an Abrahamic openness. The complexity of life required the possibility of exceptions and innovations. And man's uniqueness necessitated a variety of options.

But having said all this, Kierkegaard does present a Pattern which provides specific guidance to the Christian. Christ is truly God-with-us as Counselor. And the path of Following does not extend unbounded in all directions. When the pairs of principles discussed above are seen in relation to one another, they describe definite limits beyond which the Follower should not stray. Kierkegaard is sensitive to the complexities of life and man, but he is not struck dumb by them. He acknowledges God's sovereignty without surrendering man's obligation. The context of Following is permissive yet not licentious, free yet not libertine. Kierkegaard avoids slavish casuistry and vague abstraction, while providing concrete guidelines which nevertheless allow for individual and situational differences.

F. THE SHAPE OF FOLLOWING

Thus far we have concluded some things about the practice of Following. It is properly motivated by gratitude to the Savior, not greed for personal merit or satisfactions. The locus of Following is in the world as it is -both squalid and splendid- not exclusively or even preferably (although possibly for some) in the cloistered retreat. The Christian Follows a person, not regulae. The Pattern delimits appropriate responses, yet nevertheless provides for individual and situational variances. The guiding principles of Following can be formulated concretely if they are general enough. And specific instances of Following can be discussed if they are not considered archetypal.

If someone asks, then, "What is it like to be a Follower?" he can expect the same sort of carefully qualified answer which Kierkegaard gives throughout to such questions. But scattered over many pages of Kierkegaard's works are some continually recurring motifs which are instructive at just this point. He does have some significant things to say about what the Follower can expect to experience. He does describe what might be called the "shape" of Following. This section presents some key contours of this shape which give us a concrete, if general, outline of what is personally entailed in the practice of Following: its movement, intensity, relentlessness, discouragements, fears, hopes.

Becoming

To begin with, Kierkegaard asserts that the practice of Following takes place along the endless continuum of becoming. That is, the Christian never achieves full Imitation, but is always striving to become a more adequate Follower. Just as "one is not born with seriousness"[1] but acquires his self slowly and laboriously,[2] so too "the notion of being born with faith is as plausible as the notion of being born twenty-four years old."[3] The baptised child must later learn of his obligations and set out to obey them as closely as he can.[4] Hopefully, in time, he will become a more and more accomplished Follower.[5] One does not put on the mantle of Follower all at once, but must earn it thread by thread. And the mantle is never finished, since the Christian never rests in completion but is always becoming -a restless pilgrim on the way of Imitation. Thus it is that Kierkegaard speaks, not of _theologia beatorum_, but of _theologia viatorum_.[6]

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[1] COD 133 (IV 414).

[2] TCS 113 (V 251-252).

Intensity

Kierkegaard makes it plain that the path of the Following pilgrim is not strewn with rose petals. Rather, it is an intensely demanding, thorny, and possibly dangerous way of life. Using culinary imagery, Kierkegaard describes such a way of living as not bland but savory,[7] not sweet but salty.[8] God commands absolute obedience absolutely.[9] This requires a singleness of purpose and strength of will which necessitates a "tremendous exertion."[10] The God-driven man feels a great urgency and can waste no time on trivia.[11] Under such demanding conditions, Kierkegaard is not at all surprised that (exclusive of plots on his life) Christ did not live beyond the age of thirty-four.[12] The Pattern obliges all Christians to express their passions of love and forgiveness openly and freely, regardless of what consequences might result. The words Kierkegaard uses to convey the tenor of this expression (hensynsløs and ubetinget) connote an unrestrained, almost wanton, type of recklessness in the Christian's life. Is it not reckless to love your enemies or to turn the other cheek? And Christians are not just soldiers play-acting at war games; this is actual battle.[13] Furthermore, the Follower is not spared the dangers of temporal combat. This is fighting against flesh and blood "in a world which crucified him who was love, in a world which persecuted and liquidated so many witnesses of love."[14] Given the vulnerable nature of the Follower and the militant nature of men, affliction in various forms is inevitable.

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[3] PF 81 (III 259).

[4] Libuse L. Miller gives a colorful, whirling picture of this process of Christian becoming. For her it is

> an almost miraculous irruption, intensification, and purification of the spiritual dimension in man, which by the mysterious incrementation of discrete, qualitative changes (decisions), brought the man all the way from the state of a squalling infant to the state of the Christian existing before God (L.L. Miller, _op. cit._, p. 54).

[5] Dru 1265 (X 4 A 616). Cf. Dru 649, 1252 (VIII A 63, X 4 A 560), ED v.1 15, 32-33, 47 (III 21, 33-34, 46), TC 89 (XII 84), WLs 98 (IX 116).

[6] FT 98 (III 136). Cf. Note #70 on p. 269 of FT (III 136).

[7] JFY (Ox) 211 (XII 470).

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[8] GS 161-162 (VIII 414-415).
See also "Salt," an article of Kierkegaard's in a Copenhagen newspaper of March 30, 1855 (AC 33-37; XIV 47-51).

[9] WL 33-36 (IX 43-46)
A classic illustration for this sort of mind-set is found in the character of Brand in Ibsen's play by the same name (Henrik Ibsen, Brand, tr. M. Meyer, London, Rupert Hart-Davis, 1960). (This reference was suggested to me by Professor Paul L. Holmer.) Brand, a severe and demanding Norwegian priest, has as his watchword "All or Nothing." In order to be saved, a man must steel his will to God's stern commands. His God demands absolute obedience and offers no forgiveness for mistakes (Ibid., pp. 49, 52, 56, 74). Brand feels that the notion of a loving God who forgives is the invention of human sloth and spinelessness (Ibid., pp. 54, 56). There are those who in the play disagree with Brand and hold that God is "More like a father, less like a master" (Ibid., p. 68). Brand's mother asserts that "God is not so cruel as my son" (Ibid., p. 60. Cf. pp. 54, 56). But Brand is not swayed and offers up his wife, son, fortune, career to his "All or Nothing." In the end, near death, alone, and sick at heart, Brand questions his life-long service to the God of Wrath.

Brand: Answer me, God, in the moment of death!
If not by Will, how can Man be redeemed?
A Voice: He is the God of Love. (Ibid., p. 105)

[10] SUD 142 (XI 117). Cf. WLs 298 (IX 350-351).
The intensity of the life of Following must not be construed as a super-human or non-human mode of existence. It is fully human. In an earlier discussion, we saw that the theological self is in continuity with the human self; it surpasses it, but does not annihilate it. Thus, the individual who is aware of his own death (not death in general) will experience a sharper self-consciousness than one who drifts through life (TCS 75ff.; V 226ff.). In the case of the Christian, such an awareness is part of the intensity of the life of Following -an intensity which heightens, not destroys, a man's humanity. Herman Diem puts it this way:

> He who grows in faith becomes more himself and remains bound to that concrete personal identity (H. Diem, op. cit., p. 79).

> The collision comes because brutish men rush in on a spiritual man, or are set on him like hounds.[15]

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[11] CUP 433 (VII 421). Cf. FSE (H) 1-2 (XII 301-302).

[12] Dru 955 (X 1 A 649).

[13] AC 44, 83, 121 (XIV 62, 220, 145).

[14] WL (H) 339 (IX 350). Cf. GS 25, 107 (VIII 320, 377).

[15] Rohde 125 (XI 1 A 225). Cf. CD 191 (X 185), GS 102 (VIII 373).

The keynote of the demanding earnestness which characterizes the life of Following is sounded in this question addressed to the would-be Christian: "Is it then an impossibility for thee to become a martyr?"[16]

Constancy

And this degree of intensity is not required just on certain occasions, but is demanded of the Christian every moment of every day throughout his whole life. As Christ died to himself "every day and every blessed hour" and Paul "died every day," so too must the Follower "take up his cross daily."[17] The Christian can never relax in the service of God. According to Kierkegaard, limited commitment is no commitment, purity of heart is to will one thing wholly at all times.[18] He mentions an Oriental emperor who had a slave to remind him of various duties throughout the day.[19] In a similar fashion, the Christian must constantly remind himself of the urgency of the task of Following.

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[16] TC 219 (XII 206). Cf. Dru 723 (VIII A 482).

[17] The phrases in quotation marks are taken, respectively, from FSE (Ox) 95 (XII 360), I Cor. 15:31, and Luke 9:23. The Luke passage is directly referred to by Kierkegaard in GS 9 (VIII 308), FSE 196 (XII 456), SUD 47 and 97 (III 87 and 135), and indirectly suggested in WL^{s} 217 and 291 (IX 256, 242-243), TC 208 (XII 196), and FSE 172 (XII 433-434), (Luke references from P.S. Minear and P.S. Morimoto, op. cit., p. 24.)

[18] See the whole of PH, esp. the section entitled "Commitment to a Certain Degree," pp. 104-121 (VIII 167-178). For a typical example of Kierkegaard's emphasis on daily self-denial, see PH 103 (VIII 166).

[19] WL^{s} 292 (IX 344). Cf. WL^{s} 31 (IX 39-40).

The unsleeping eyes of God watch his every move.[20] Owing to the trials the Christian faces -self-imposed and from without-[21] the way is difficult and the temptation for apostasy is forever present. Given these conditions, it is understandable that Kierkegaard asserted that the life of Following can be maintained only "by fighting for its survival every instant."[22] These words, "fighting" and "every instant," sum up Kierkegaard's notion of the intensity of the life of Following.[23]

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[20] Supra pp. 20-23, 48-50.

[21] For this "double danger" (dobbelt Farens), the rebellion against the world and against one's self, see WL 186 (IX 183), etc.

[22] TC 207 (XII 195).
This citation is applied by Kierkegaard to the Church in general. But his notion of the Church is such that his words apply to the individual Christian as well.

[23] One of the main characters in Andre Malraux's The Royal Way (New York, Random House Vintage Books, 1961) embodies part of what Kierkegaard means by fighting every instant to maintain the intensity of one's obedience. Perken, the German-heimatlos adventurer in Cambodia, is obsessed with death. He reflects on it at length and discusses it endlessly. He is fascinated by death -his own death, not death in general. Always he wonders how he will acquit himself when the end comes. Will he curse, wail, whimper? Or will he meet it face to face, with control and honor -as he feels he must. It is as if his whole life is but a training ground for that one final campaign on which everything is staked and on which his self-evaluation is to be based. Carefully and strenuously he prepares himself for his hour of trial. Perken's all-important "fight" is to be isolated in his last "instant."

But suppose that Perken had to "die daily." In this case, each moment of "dying" would require the exercise of all his intense preparation. If he were to acquit himself with honor daily, he must bring to bear his steeled resolve, not just once, but time and time again. Perken's characteristics, applied moment by moment throughout a lifetime suggest the sort of intense and constant obedience required of

Unaccomplishable

What a forbidding picture, and what discouraging prospects for success! Such a life of constant battling does not appeal to most people. It forsakes the familiar and the solid, is impractical and dangerous, involves heterogeniety and open conflict with the world.[24] Even if one undertakes the task of weaning himself away from the world, he will find it an incredibly intricate process in which every failure is costly.

> Much the same thing is found in fairy-stories where the man under a spell has to play the same piece backwards, and every time he makes the slightest mistake has to begin again from the end.[25]

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the Christian. Like Paul, the Christian faces the demanding task of dying daily to himself and the world (see I Cor. 15:31 and Luke 9:23).

How closely Kierkegaard's own life conformed to this sort of Following is, of course, impossible to say. We have only his words and the words of others. And words do not mean much here, as we have seen. Some of Kierkegaard's words are interesting to note in this connection, however. Johannes Climacus writes that the state of his life, which he hopes is "to the honor of God," is "in readiness day and night" (PF 3;IV 177). In The Point of View Kierkegaard comments that he has to convince himself anew each day that God exists (POV 66; XIII 557). In his Journals he describes himself as "only drawn to one friend that I might be entirely his, the Lord Jesus Christ . . ." (Dru 738; VIII A 604). Also, he confesses that "I loved the world; now I am weaned" (Dru 726; VIII A 515. Cf. POV 96; XIII 578). The conflict with the Corsair has done this. And he reveals that "I think I have in a terrible degree a sense of my responsibility to God . . ." (Dru 886: X 1 A 131). These situations, taken in order, speak of the sort of constant, single-focused, persecuted, intense Christian life of which we have been speaking.

[24] CD 191 (X 185), FSE (Ox) 200 (XII 459), TC 218 (XII 205), WLs 298 (IX 350-351), Dru 1380 (E.P. ix p. 284), etc.

[25] Dru 635 (VIII A 17).

And man's "sympathetic antipathy" for sinning insures his regular and generic failure.[26] Although a man is earnestly striving, he is not equal to the task: he goes off in the wrong direction because of lack of proper reflection; he loses time on fruitless reflection; he wastes energy on peripheral concerns.[27] Kierkegaard remarked that he had never known a Christian who upheld fully the commands of Imitation.[28] Consequently he scoffs at the conceit of the so-called "Church triumphant."[29] "None of us is a pure man."[30] Complete obedience, like eternal happiness, cannot be possessed in time.[31] As a result, even though "the whole of time and existence should be the period of striving," it is clear that the task is unaccomplishable.[32]

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[26] COD (entire). Cf. Dru 1289 (X 5 A 101).

[27] GS 105 (VIII 376).

[28] Rohde 182 (IX A 284).

[29] TC 206 (XII 194).

[30] WLs 58 (IX 71).

[31] CUP 355 (VII 344).

[32] CUP 356 (VII 344). Cf. WL 83 (IX 100).
Reuel L. Howe describes the situation in this fashion:

> We know that the ugliness of our lives can never reproduce the beauty of His. From a human point of view, the imitation of Christ is a complete impossibility, and one wonders how so many Christians can go on, generation after generation, thinking that this is their task and that they can accomplish it . . . Is it possible that He asked us to so something that is beyond our power of accomplishment? If this is so, then far from being Savior, He is one of the most cruel of men. There must be some other answer (Reuel L. Howe, Herein is Love, Chicago, The Judson Press, 1961, p. 36.)

Necessary Repentance

The juxtaposition of Christianity's absolute commands and the Christian's relative abilities makes confession and repentance necessary. Since the Follower can only approximate the Pattern, he has no other recourse than to admit his lack openly, prayerfully, and continually. "Fear [ing] God more than men,"[33] he must "confess daily,"[34] "repent always,"[35] being moved to humility through remembrance of past sins committed.[36] What is required is no momentary remorse or shallow contrition,[37] but rather a genuine acknowledgement of one's "wretchedness"[38] in comparison with the holiness of God and the perfection of the Pattern. I am convinced that the idea of repentance holds a central place in Kierkegaard's thought. References to the themes of confession and repentance are found throughout his writings. For the noun anger (repentance) alone, Himmelstrup's Register lists seventy-three separate references of varying lengths scattered throughout twenty of Kierkegaard's major works, not including his newspaper articles, "Instant" pamphlets, or the massive Journals.[39] In 1845, Kierkegaard devoted an entire long discourse to plumbing the depths of repentance, discussing various levels of repentance, the sorrow of sin, active and passive repentance, and so forth.[40] One complete sub-section of Concluding Unscientific Postscript (1846) takes up in detail the question of repentance and the recollection of guilt.[41] One-eighth of Purity of Heart (1847) deals explicitly with the meaning of confession, remorse, repentance.[42] Repentance provides the theme for one of Kierkegaard's articles in a Copenhagen newspaper in 1855.[43] In addition to this direct documentation, there are various oblique ways to show Kierkegaard's emphasis on repentance. One example of this involves the interlocking relationship between selfhood and the Christian life which was considered earlier.[44] The possession of mature selfhood, Kierkegaard claims, is necessary to the appropriation of the Christian life pattern. Thus, any major stimulus to mature Christian selfhood is certain to command a central place in Kierkegaard's thought. Repentance is such a stimulus, claims Kierkegaard. To the drifting self who has sunk to the depths of despair, repentance is the vehicle in which

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[33] GS 146 (VIII 404).

[34] PH 215, 217 (VIII 239, 241).

[35] PH 38 (VIII 124).

[36] PH 45 (VIII 128-129).

[37] PH 43-44 (VIII 127-128).

[38] AC 29 (XIV 40).

[39] J. Himmelstrup, op. cit., p. 21.

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[40] TCS 1-41 (V 178-203).

[41] CUP 463, 467-493 (VII 453, 457-484).

[42] PH 32-56 (VIII 120-135).

[43] AC 28-29 (XIV 39-40). From "The Fatherland," March 22, 1855.

[44] Supra Division I, esp. pp. 20-29, 48-56, 77-94.

"the spirit-life might break through . . ."[45] Repentance is the "new birth" by means of which a man leaves his previous state of wandering Error and moves to Truth, so that "a change takes place within him like the change from non-being to being."[46] Weighted down with the iniquity of his forefathers, the Jew's selfhood was stunted, whereas the Christian can "choose himself . . . through repentance."[47] "New life mat be born of [repentance]."[48] The shaping power of repentance is expressed in this citation:

> [a man] repents himself back into himself, back into the family, back into the race, until he finds himself in God.[49]

Thus, the claim for the centrality of repentance in Kierkegaard's thought receives further support from this decisive role he gives to repentance in the development of selfhood. His emphasis on repentance is seen in these concluding citations:

> In Christianity, repentance found for the first time its true expression.[50]
>
> [Kierkegaard considered that ~~what~~ his era -and any era- desperately needed was a] true preacher of repentance.[51]

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[45] SUD 193 (XI 171).

[46] PF 13 (IV 188).

[47] EO v.2 222 (II 195-196).

[48] PH 42 (VIII 127).

[49] EO v.2 220 (II 194).
All of this documentation is taken from Kierkegaard's works published in 1843, 1844, 1847, 1849.

[50] EO v.2 222 (II 195-196).

[51] RDT in PA 120-121 (XI 81-82).

> A man's highest Christian preaching is first and foremost a preaching of repentance.[52]

It is quite understandable that Kierkegaard's declaration of the absolute command of Following and his views concerning man's basic disobedience would lead him to stress repentance as of major importance for the life of Following.

Sufficient Grace

But what can the repentant sinner expect from a God who requires complete and unresting obedience to the absolute commands of Following? Part of the answer to this question is found in the literature relating to Kierkegaard's criticism of Danish Christendom. The prospects for the penitent are not very reassuring. According to Kierkegaard, official Lutheranism in Denmark proclaimed a "mild and mawkish" Christ and preached a "coddling love."[53] "Official preaching has falsely represented . . . . Christianity as nothing but consolation, happiness, etc."[54] Christendom has become so much of a balm that people have forgotten its sting.[55] Kierkegaard insisted that "'grace' . . . must never be used to suppress or diminish the requirement."[56] Thus, Kierkegaard sets out to stress "severity first."[57] We have already discussed this severity as it occurs in Kierkegaard's emphasis on the terrible demands of the Inviter, the judgmental aspects of life in the presence of the Pattern, and the intensity of Following. Who can stand -even as a penitent- before such a blazing deity as appears on Kierkegaard's pages?

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[52] AC 17 (XIV 24).

[53] WL (H) 348 (IX 356).

[54] Dru 1208 (X 4 A 234).

[55] Dru 999 (X 2 A 187).

[56] AC 38 (XIV 53).

[57] Dru 842 (IX A 413).

It is true that in one place in his Journals Kierkegaard denies that any one man can express both sides of the Christian Law-Gospel duality. Christ could; but those who came after him stressed first one side and then the other. Kierkegaard diagrams it this way:

Christ
Paul -- James
Peter -- John, etc.[58]

Has Kierkegaard chosen to follow James and Peter? Could we add "Luther -- Kierkegaard" to this diagram? It would seem so. Kierkegaard himself expressed a preference for James and his "doers of the word" approach.[59] His books speak long and dramatically on behalf of the demand of obedience. A first or even second reading of Kierkegaard may lead one to the conclusion that here is a man whose God demands and demands and never gives, judges and judges and never forgives. The so-called "Kierkegaardian hero" is sometimes styled as one who must shoulder enormous burdens, laboring alone before a silent and angry God who records each fall, slip, and wince for future retribution. Kierkegaard's God might be characterized as being miserly with his grace or lacking it altogether.

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[58] Dru 1259 (X 4 A 594).

[59] FSE (Ox) 41, 49-50 (XII 307, 314-315). Cf. Dru 224 (II A 266).

However, a careful study of Kierkegaard will reveal that, for him, God is indeed gracious, and the Christian can mix his repentance with confidence. The supporting foundation for this point has already been laid. Earlier I pointed out not only the terror and offensiveness of the Inviter, but also his attractiveness. The divine presence in one's life was shown to be not only demanding but also encouraging.[60] Now at this point, it is maintained that the Christian's movement of repentance is met not only with judgment but with grace. Training in Christianity, a book considered to epitomize the intense and terrible demands of Imitation, contains the following "moral":

> 'but if the Christian life is something so terrible and frightful, how in the world can a person get the idea of accepting it.' Quite simply, and if you want that too, quite in a Lutheran way: only the consciousness of sin can force one into this dreadful situation -the power on the other side being grace. And in that very instant the Christian life transforms itself and is sheer gentleness, grace, loving-kindness, and compassion. Looked at from any other point of view, Christianity is and must be a sort of madness or the greatest horror.[61]

Christianity, then, is both frightful and gracious, so that

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[60] Supra pp. 186-198, 226-234, 251-269.

[61] TC 71 (XII 64).

"severe as it is, it is equally gentle."[62] This theme rings throughout Kierkegaard's religious works: "Christ is both our Savior and our Judge."[63] The central theme of Christ as judging Pattern is never separated from the equally central theme of Christ as atoning Redeemer. The last page of Works of Love proclaims that in God are found both judgment and grace.[64] The whole of Christian Discourses is virtually dedicated to explicating both elements of this dual thrust.[65] The Journals repeat over and over Kierkegaard's insistence on the combining of divine strictness and pardon.[66] In Judge for Yourselves, he summarized it this way:

> We constantly recall to mind that Jesus Christ was not only a pattern but also the Redeemer, in order that the Pattern may not alarm us to desperation; . . .[67]

Many other similar passages could be cited.[68] The point is

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[62] Dru 1113 (X 3 A 187).

[63] Dru 222 (II A 261).

[64] WL^s 310 (IX 364-365).

[65] See esp. the prayer in CD 297 (X 303).

[66] Dru 116, 222, 692, 887, 1113, 1266, 1282, etc. (II A 63, II A 261, VIII A 247, X 1 A 134, X 3 A 187, X 4 A 624, X 5 A 23).

[67] JFY (Ox) 171 (XII 432).

[68] Himmelstrup's Register lists 63 entries under the noun naade (grace) alone. The best of these are cited in the text above. Some other major references are: ED v. 7-47 (V 81-105) (contentment with grace), CD 269-273 (X 267-271) (grace for the penitent), Dru 1154, 1248, 1252, etc. (X 3 A 617, X 4 A 545, X 4 A 560, X 5 A 54, etc.).

The above material is taken from Kierkegaard's published works and the more formal-appearing of his Journals entries. In the Journals, also, are entries which appear to be of a more intimate and personally confessing nature. On the topic clear. Intensity, single-mindedness, purity are required. Severity and judgment are present. But also present is grace. The terrible urgency of the command remains, but gone is the desperation. The Christian knows that grace meets the strayed and repentant Follower of Christ -the same Christ who is both Pattern and Redeemer.

If one were to formulate a pair of Pattern-derived principles on the topic at hand, one would involve "works" and the other "grace." Sooner or later the question arises: Which is the dominant theme, which comes first? It was indicated previously how such pairs of principles are reciprocally related, qualifying one another, permitting some leeway, but delimiting their respective applications. In such a relationship, the question of sequence or dominance does

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of grace, I find both types of entries to be mutually compatible. But I cannot hold that the intimate-appearing entries represent the "real" Kierkegaard and thus show the continuity of his personal faith and published works. No scholar qua scholar has the right to make such conclusions. This is the legitimate domain of the historical detective who is willing to use his intuition and trust his hunches. At this point, I merely record below some of these more intimate-appearing entries. In one place, Kierkegaard remarks that he must guard against his basic gentleness, lest it creep into his ideas on Christianity and soften and spoil them (Dru 1172; X 3 A 716). He "pleads" for grace and "flies to grace" in his need for succor (Dru 747, 1220; VIII A 640, X 4 A 299). He admits that he cannot be fully obedient, and so must rely gratefully on Christ's saving death (Dru 919; X 1 A 425). One entry pictures Peter as too afraid of God's wrath, whereas Kierkegaard -a denier, too- is joyful and glad in the presence of such a God (Dru 987; X 2 A 134). The pastor who attended Kierkegaard just before his death reported that Kierkegaard expressed confidence in the face of the judgment to come because he relied on grace alone (W. Lowrie, Kierkegaard, p. 586).

not arise. We are not dealing with solid matter which cannot occupy the same space as other matter and therefore must either be above it or below it, to one side or the other. Nor are we dealing with assertions which are subject to rules of mutual exclusion. We are dealing with God's grace and God's commands. No simple spatial or logical metaphors can express all that is involved here. God's grace and commands interpermeate one another yet do not displace one another, are asserted simultaneously yet do not exclude one another.

However, Kierkegaard has been accused of emphasizing works at the expense of grace, stressing the demand so much that forgiveness is forgotten or denied, and man becomes only peccator. If a thinker is uncomfortable in the presence of unresolved thought-tensions, he may try to see Kierkegaard's precarious balance as weighted on one side or the other. Some readers, uneasy amidst the unverbalizable, hasten to close what Kierkegaard insisted must remain open. Just because a man is pro-works, this does not mean he is anti-grace. Speaking this way, it can be said that Kierkegaard was both pro-works and pro-grace. To read him otherwise is to misread him: to be blind to some of his words; to force upon him categories of thought which he explicitly denies; to operate with a rigid sequential, spatial metaphor system. If these errors are avoided, Kierkegaard's religious writings can be seen as loudly proclaiming God's grace.

Despite such warning, the question persists: Which dominates, grace or works? It is tempting to rule the question out of order on the Kierkegaardian grounds described above. But at times Kierkegaard himself, for all his balance, gives more than a hint that he inclines toward grace. Sometimes he lapses into sequential and spatial metaphors on this subject. And when he does, it is grace which is "first" or "on top." He asserts that grace is "the decisive" point of Christianity.[69] It is grace which comes "in the first place" to meet the sinful man, even before he seeks it in the sacraments (which are "grace in the second place").[70] Christ is silent when confronted by man's failure, and thus "hides the multitude of sins."[71] The constant love of Christ for Peter the denier never vascillates, although Peter does.[72] One's thoughts of God should not remind him of his sins, but of forgiveness.[73] Kierkegaard penned this prayer in his Journals:

> God of love! Thou hast commanded us to forgive our enemies, our brother in error, not seven times, but seventy times seven; When wilt Thou tire of pardoning a truly repentant sinner?[74]

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[69] Dru 1252 (X 4 A 560).

[70] Dru 1289 (X 5 A 101). Dru 1290 (X 5 A 103).

[71] WL^s 227-242, esp. 233 (IX 265-285, esp. 274-275).

[72] WL^s 136-141 (IX 160-166).

[73] Dru 688 (VIII A 230).

[74] P. LeFevre, The Prayers of Kierkegaard, p. 29, (IX A 328).

For Kierkegaard, this could only be a rhetorical question.

> It is not unknown that when a sinner returns repentant to his father, the father hardens his heart and will not forgive him. With God that never happens; . . .[75]

No theme sounds more loudly and persistently throughout Kierkegaard's authorship than the all-forgiving grace of God. The Inviter offers not only challenge and judgment, but also rest and solace. We have seen that proper Following of Christ results, not from fear of retribution, but from thanksgiving for divine grace. The Christian can claim no merit for his Following, but confesses a total reliance on grace. The stained and penitent Follower knows that no matter where he has strayed, grace was with him and is with him now -driving out desperation, ringing in encouragement, hope, confidence. Thus, grace constitutes the initial motivation for Following, the continuing encouragement along the way, the exorciser of pride in accomplishment, and the saving consolation to the repentant wanderer. All along the continuum of Following -from start to finish- grace is present. Employing the sequential metaphor, it appears that grace is dominant. Speaking in the mode of reciprocally related, Pattern-derived principles, we can say both that not only are the commands unconditional (and therefore unaccomplishable), but also that grace is inexhaustible (and undeserved). In Kierkegaard's writings, the command to Follow

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[75] Dru 1181 (X 3 A 792).

Christ may rival grace for emphasis, but it cannot surpass it in rank and power.

CONCLUSION

The preceding discussion has conducted the reader on an exploration of the practice of Following. Certain aspects were found to lend themselves to rather direct exposition and analysis. On the basis of this material, some general contours and distinctive features of Following were presented. On the other hand, it was made clear that this practice of Following was unusual, since some of its ingredients were unverbalizable and others participated in the unstable ambiguities of life. By using the indirect techniques of negation, comparison, suggestion, and illustration, I hoped to evoke the intangible, elusive spirit of the Follower's life. And when Kierkegaard was silent and merely pointed, his silence was respected and not broken. But we endeavored to understand why he was silent and to see in what direction he was pointing. Through these various approaches, each appropriate to the material at hand, the different levels of the life of Imitation were explored and the findings recorded to furnish us with insight into the complex practice of Following.

The shape of this practice which emerged is characterized by the following contours. According to Kierkegaard, a person is properly drawn along the path of Imitation by gratitude to his Savior, not by a quest for merit or mystical fellowship. The Christian does not seek to reproduce the details of Christ's life or engage in any Imitatio discipline designed to urge him toward Christ-likeness. Instead he becomes a Follower of Jesus. This life of Following does not force him to retreat from a despicable world, but leads him fully into the world, affirming its goodness and evaluating his earthly fortunes with respect to the absolute telos. The Imitator is freed from the yoke of universally applied regulae which propose to dictate his every move. Rather, he is invited to enter life in the presence of God as Teacher, Judge, and Comforter. The Teacher instructs him in the restrictive guidelines of the path of Following. In the presence of the Judge, he confronts the immense, demanding, and unaccomplishable tasks of the Christian life. From the Comforter he learns that repentance is necessary to the life of Following, and that his confession is met with unearned, saving forgiveness. Thus, he is shown the Pattern, charged with the responsibility of shaping his life after it, warned not to flee to grace and succor too soon, yet promised that forgiveness and healing will not be withheld.

But lest this description of the practice of Following appear too static and lifeless -succumbing to the irrelevancies of general theories and some formal theology- Kierkegaard inserts some explosive and vivifying elements. To him, gratitude is no vague sentiment; it is heart-felt thanks for specific gifts and praise for the healing of particular wounds. Thus the Kierkegaardian categories, generally stated, are clearly intended to be appropriated by individuals and made to impinge on concrete instances in their lives. The Christian may be permitted to enter into public life, but each man is obligated to discern when temptation is about to win, when the world gets too close to his price. Each man, aware of his own set of weaknesses, must judge for himself when he is affirming the world and when he is being seduced by it. Every Follower lives in the presence of guidance, judgment, and encouragement. But these presences relate differently to various people's decisions, flaws, and lostness. There are specific reasons why Kierkegaard established his central themes, but refused to detail them further. The fact of God's free sovereignty necessitates an openness to exception. The shifting complexity of life requires room for innovation. And the uniqueness of each man occasions many possible options. Whenever Kierkegaard discusses a specific instance of Following, these factors determine that he does not establish the instance as a universal law. The Follower's relationship to the Pattern is personal and idiosyncratic, adaptive to the world and open to God.

Despite this seeming confusion and permissiveness in the practice of Following, it was argued that Kierkegaard did present the Pattern which provides specific guidance and limitations for the Christian life. However, we noted that Kierkegaard goes about this in his own way. Having carefully said what Following is not, he takes special care in explaining what it is. He employs concreteness yet avoids casuistry, respects the "explosive" factors yet does not deny man's obligation. Describing the way of Following as a path, Kierkegaard presents a series of reciprocally related guiding principles which establish definite boundaries beyond which the Christian must not trespass. These boundaries are far enough apart to allow for situational and individual variances, yet are sufficiently restrictive to be genuinely directing and limiting. Using the language of contemporaneity, Kierkegaard asserts that life in the presence of the Pattern affords the Christian access to counsel in time of decision and need. If the guidance is not always forthcoming or specific, the Christian nevertheless acknowledges the supporting presence of his Lord, and rejoices in the liberating and educating freedom which is his gift and responsibility.

This Division has employed description and analysis where possible, and analogies and other methods where indirection was necessary. When Kierkegaard was silent, the reasons for his silence proved insightful. But the drive to completion is thwarted by Kierkegaard's refusal to detail and systematize his thoughts on this topic. We have followed him as far as he has gone. And we have noted why he stopped his words when he did. As a result, the contours and spirit of the practice of Following have become clearer. And we have come to expect what sort of a reply Kierkegaard would give to those who seek further illumination.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation has presented a detailed exposition and interpretive analysis of the theme of the Imitation of Christ in the writings of Søren Kierkegaard. The controlling goal throughout has been to achieve clarity concerning what Kierkegaard did and did not say about Imitation. The thoughts herein attributed to Kierkegaard are the result of thorough-going basic research in the original sources, as attested by their comprehensive and decisive documentation. In addition to exposition and analysis, on these pages are found theses, arguments, criticisms, interpretations. But these were introduced only as a result of careful study of Kierkegaard's collected works and papers, as well as other material. This dissertation has employed the methodology whereby a delimited area is selected for detailed study and, insofar as this is possible, interpretation is not permitted until the basic research has been completed.

Ordinarily, in an essay of this sort, all this would be assumed. But Kierkegaard's vast and labyrinthine authorship has not rendered this particular methodology popular among either most students of Kierkegaard or readers of books about him. How tempting it is to hurry to some conclusions based on general impressions. And how easily does such hasty literature entertain its readers. Fortunately, Kierkegaard has now become less popularly fashionable. And there is every reason to believe that the literature about him in English will take a more studied, restrained turn. Both Scandinavian and German Kierkegaard scholarship have passed beyond the early phases of over-enthusiasn, and have turned to more careful analyses of the texts themselves. The goal has been to let Kierkegaard speak for himself without the interrupting, distracting, and frequently distorting chorus of assorted admirers, critics, and devotees. In this context, the right to interpret must be earned and not merely usurped. It is hoped that British and American Kierkegaard scholarship has come of age in this respect. This dissertation has been constructed after the pattern which proceeds by applying carefully precise methods of investigation to limited areas of Kierkegaard's thought, allowing interpretation to occur, if at all, only after thorough basic research. Until many more such studies are carried out, students -especially those who work primarily in English- will be continually tempted to allow their enthusiasm or distaste for what they have read of Kierkegaard to determine their opinions about his thought in a premature fashion.

The intricately interwoven whole of Kierkegaardian Imitation has been discussed above under three separate headings: The Candidate Imitator, The One Imitated, and The Practice of Imitation. The first Division of this essay dealt with the Candidate Imitator and stressed the personal requirements which Kierkegaard considered necessary for the would-be Follower of Christ. It was noted that Kierkegaard speaks of an organic-like growth of the self and characterizes mature selfhood in terms of self-awareness, responsibility, and directable will. Related to his discussion of the self is his treatment of the life-pattern (livsanskuelse), which is described as a cohesive style of life dominated by a master passion. Active commitment to such a style of life would require self-conscious and energetic devotion to the pursuit of pre-determined goals. In a sense, the self is the raw material of personality and the life-pattern is that which gives it a specific shape, content, direction. It was argued that Kierkegaard presents his ideas on the self and the life-pattern in metaphorical language which he designed in order to make contact with his readers, not to isolate the self's proprium. Each man is destined to become a mature self, and Kierkegaard's literature is judged to be more of a stimulus to growth than a detached analysis of the growth process itself. To this end he exposes and describes the various threats to the self's maturation: the mass self, environmental trivialization, and so forth. By this means, he hopes to rescue those trapped in immaturity, and to warn others of the dangers they face. Kierkegaard views his literature, in part, as a medium for translating the masses into individuals and thus stimulating the development of stunted selves. The significance of this enterprise is underscored when one realizes that only mature selves are capable of successfully appropriating and sustaining any life-pattern. And just how does a mature self become related to a life-pattern? This takes place through the vehicle of choice. The nineteenth century confusion of quantitative and qualitative approaches to decisions of this type, especially as related to religious commitment, was viewed by Kierkegaard as an affront to clarity and honesty and as a hindrance to genuine faith. The skillful methods by which he clarified this muddle are a model of economy and precision. Along with the exposition of his views on the self and mature selfhood, the life-pattern, and choice, the assertion was made that Kierkegaard dealt with such matters on behalf of the theological self. It was argued that he carried out his exploration of these areas for edification and awakening of a specifically Christian nature. His clarification of the movement from unbelief to belief was intended to remove obstacles so that people might make the movement for themselves. His detailing of the life-pattern category established the foundation for his discussions of Christ as Pattern for the Christian life. His analysis of selfhood spelled out the personal requirements for the would-be Christian. For no one can devote himself to the task of Imitation unless he is first aware that he has a self to devote. And no one can understand the responsibilities of Imitation without first having a sense of responsibility. Furthermore, no one can bend his will to the demands of discipleship unless he first knows that he has a will and has learned to command it. On the basis of the evidence presented, it was concluded that Kierkegaard worked out these psychological and philosophical ideas in a

Church-oriented context, and that he presented them in order to further the understanding and growth of the Christian life of Imitation. Since only individuals can engage in the Christian life, Kierkegaard sought to translate the Danish masses into individuals. Since the confusion of faith and knowledge blockades the way to faith, he sought to remove the confusion. It was proposed above that in order to eliminate the existing misconceptions and set Danish Christendom back on the path of true faith, Kierkegaard had to re-educate the populace on these basic prolegomena questions. He believed that only after this had been done, could his countrymen regain the proper relationship to the Christian life of the Imitation of Christ.

The focus of Division two was on the One Imitated, Jesus Christ, who establishes the Pattern for Imitation. The first part of this Division discussed how and why Kierkegaard defended so vigorously the concrete life and speech of Jesus as recorded in the New Testament. We noted how the dehistoricizing method yielded a fantastic Jesus by subjecting him to poetization, over-deification, and doctrinal transformation. It was asserted that in opposition to this, Kierkegaard mounted his own rehistoricizing counter-attack which employed various methods to emphasize the concrete humanity of Jesus whose life was lived out in the common arena of human events. On the basis of evidence presented, it was argued that Kierkegaard took this particular stance, not only because he thought it was true to the New Testament record, but also because it was crucial to his understanding of the Christian life of Imitation. If the dehistoricizers were allowed to carry the day, several things would happen: (1) Jesus is robbed of his humanity, (2) he is rendered unencounterable, and (3) the category of Imitation is evacuated of its specific content. Since Kierkegaard lays great stress on the concrete life of Imitation and on the encounter with Jesus as the entrance to this life, it is essential for him to maintain Jesus' historicity. A parallel case is made out above concerning the concreteness and vitality of Jesus' speech. Kierkegaard hoped to clear the theological scene of various "literateurs" whose gnostic-like and over-academic tactics distort the intent and content of Jesus' recorded words. Kierkegaard insisted that Jesus spoke much about life-situations and personal relationships which can find their application in anyone's daily life and place requirements of obedience upon would-be Christians in today's world. Thus, it was concluded that Kierkegaard mounted his defense of the concreteness of Jesus' life and words in order to preserve and vivify the Christian commands of the Imitation of Christ.

Further understanding of Kierkegaard's views on the One Imitated was achieved through a presentation of two central characteristics of Jesus: his offensiveness and his attractiveness. If, as was proposed, Kierkegaardian Christianity is offensive to scientific reason or logical reason, then the prime concerns of Christianity are centered in the area of historical event or in the realm of right doctrine. Such a centering would permit and encourage much that Kierkegaard opposed or carefully qualified. The issues involved in this puzzle and the documentation required to solve it were presented in Part two of Division two. According to Kierkegaard, the tradition concerning Jesus and his invitation of "Follow me" are indeed offensive. But it is comfortable reason which is offended, not the other varieties of reason mentioned. Under these circumstances, the prime locus of the Christian life is centered in the concrete, day-to-day, act-by-act existence of the individual Christian. This is precisely the context for the Imitation of Christ. By demonstrating that Kierkegaardian Christianity is not offensive to scientific reason and logical reason (since they operate at different "levels"), but is in fact eminently offensive to comfortable reason, this context of Imitation has been preserved. And not only has it been preserved, but it was shown that the dominant element of Christianity's offensiveness is crucially bound up with the very fiber of the life of Imitation itself. Thus, that which appeared to threaten Imitation turned out finally to establish further the centrality of Imitation in the thought of Kierkegaard.

Despite the terrible demands implicit in the Inviter's "Come unto me," it was argued that Kierkegaard finds much in it that is significantly attractive. If one is repelled by the demands, he is nonetheless drawn to the promises and the presence which offer succor and victory. Kierkegaard claims that in Christ man can find release from anguished striving and the answer to the need for forgiveness. The Judge is also the Comforter; and he who wars against man's rebellion is also the Prince of Peace. Thus, the command of Imitation, awesome as it is, can be heard with joy and thanksgiving. Jesus is both offensive and attractive. If one is to share his glory, he must also share his cross. Kierkegaard held that the demanding task of Imitation is unavoidable for the Christian. But those who strive to Follow in Christ's footsteps can proceed with confidence and living hope. It was concluded that the Kierkegaardian literature self-consciously develops an intricately unified word picture of Jesus Christ who lived and spoke concretely and who is both offensive and attractive. And it is this same Jesus whom Kierkegaard proclaims as the One to be Imitated.

The first two Divisions of this study presented Kierkegaard's views on the characteristics of the Candidate Imitator and the identity of the One to be Imitated. The third and final Division set out to describe, insofar as this is possible, the practice of Imitation. Given the qualified and committed Candidate who accepts Jesus Christ as the Pattern for his daily life, what can be said about the actual shape of such a life? At the very outset it was made clear that, from Kierkegaard's standpoint, to answer this question was both significant and difficult. It is difficult because we are dealing with life itself -that unusual, frequently unspeakable, amorphous commodity which is so idiosyncratic for each man, so unpredictably different from moment to moment, and which is subject to the free and sovereign in-breaking of God. Despite these cautionary and restricting qualifications, it was shown that Kierkegaard attempted to describe the practice of Following because thereby some clarity might be achieved as to what Christianity is and is not, and some readers might be prompted to seek to discover what it means to be a Christian. But due to the unusual nature of the subject matter, Kierkegaard (and similarly this essay) employed a variety of descriptive methods: straightforward exposition, interpretive analysis, negation, analogy, and other sorts of creative indirection. Much of this material, when isolated and analyzed, is richly informative. However, when Kierkegaard is silent, his silence is respected, and the proposed reasons for his silence were shown to be insightful. Kierkegaard's frequent refusal to systematize and specify is not over-ruled, and we followed him as far as he went, being instructed by the reasons for his stopping when he did. As a result of this many-sided and variously-framed exploration, the outline and contours of the shape of Following emerged. It was proposed that, according to Kierkegaard, the proper stimulus to Imitation comes from gratitude, not the quest for merit or mystical fellowship. The would-be Christian does not seek to reduplicate the details of Christ's life by means of a deliberately designed Imitatio discipline, nor is he subjected to universally applied regulae. He is not forced to retreat from a despicable world, but rather affirms the world's goodness and endeavors to live fully in it with respect to the absolute telos. The Christian is commanded to become a Follower of Jesus and invited to live his life in the presence of God as Teacher, Judge, Comforter. The Teacher instructs him in the restrictive guidelines of the path of Following by presenting the reciprocally related guiding principles which allow for situational and individual variances, yet are sufficiently limiting to establish definite boundaries beyond which the Christian must not trespass. In the presence of the Judge the Christian confronts his own unavoidable failures -due to the absolute command and his relative obedience. From the Comforter he learns the necessity of repentance and the sufficiency of unearned, saving forgiveness. This, in part, is "what Christianity is," says Kierkegaard. But what it means "to be a Christian" is another kind of question. In the latter case these general Kierkegaardian categories are appropriated by individual men and impinge on concrete instances in their lives. It would rarely be the same for any two people, or for any one person at two different moments in his lifetime. Shunning the model of the universal law, Kierkegaard insists that the Follower's relationship to the Pattern is personal and idiosyncratic, adaptive to the world, and open to God. Bringing together the previously presented material on the Candidate Imitator and the One Imitated, and by the use of various descriptive techniques, the final Division presented an exposition and interpretive analysis of Kierkegaard's understanding of the practice of Imitation.

The unified cohesiveness of the various elements of thought on Kierkegaardian Imitation was asserted at the very outset and made progressively manifest as the material was taken up point by point and related to the surrounding context. All the points discussed on these pages are unified by a common referent: the Imitation of Christ. Each Division requires the other two for proper and complete qualification, interpretation, and application. Since Kierkegaardian Imitation of Christ is not a Christology or a formal theory, but rather a life-pattern which only a self can choose and appropriate, it was necessary to discuss the topics of the self, the life-pattern, and choice. Since we are not dealing simply with the form of Imitation, but with the Imitation of Christ, it must be made plain that and how it is Jesus Christ in whom Kierkegaard finds the precedents which establish the locus, nature, demands, and promises of this Christian life-pattern. Also, the spiritual context within which the would-be Christian lives is an important "environmental" aspect of Following and is evoked only through critical comparison and creative indirection. Thus, any two Divisions together provide the proper perspective from which to view the remaining one. Furthermore, as was made clear throughout, no one strand of the discussion can be lifted up for analysis without bringing with it the whole fabric of Imitation. Since Jesus' concrete life and words constitute the Pattern, then the practice of Imitation has its locus in the concrete life, which only mature selves are capable of sustaining in a significant manner. Because Jesus' invitation, "Follow me," is intentionally and decisively offensive to comfortable reason, then the practice of Imitation entails a constant warfare against selfishness and worldliness, which conflict can be conducted only by well-developed selves who know their enemies, recognize their own weaknesses, and are capable of such devoted and intense warfare. Jesus promises release from the bonds of error, sin, and death. Such release can be the occasion for genuine thanksgiving and can lead to a life of Following, if the person is capable of recognizing his bonds and grasping the magnitude of the emancipating Good News. According to Kierkegaard, the accompanying presence of God as Teacher, Judge, and Comforter is offered to each individual as a guiding context for the practice of his daily life, if he is able to make the appropriate movements of response -risking a commitment, entering an intensely personal environment, accepting the stern demands, and trusting in sufficient grace. It is concluded, then, that these three inter-related Divisions present a unified exposition and interpretive analysis of the theme of the Imitation of Christ in the writings of Søren Kierkegaard.

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